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ABSTRACT

These two volumes constitute a set of modules for an individualized, competency-based training program intended to help the user acquire the skills and knowledge needed to provide a high-quality child care program for school-age children. The modules are intended for use by those just entering school-age care and by those who have been involved in school-age care for many years and want to update their skills and knowledge. Volume 1 consists of the following sections: (1) an Overview chapter, which briefly summarizes the content addressed in the training program, how the training program works, and what makes the training program unique; (2) a glossary; (3) a bibliography of 72 items, subdivided by module topic; (4) a list of 13 publishers and distributors of resources; (5) a self-assessment keyed to the topics of the modules; and (6) an individual training plan form. Six modules follow, on safety, health, program environment, physical development, cognitive development, and communication skills. Each module includes an overview, simulations of situations to which the user is asked to respond, and a pre-training assessment on the topic of the module. Volume 2 includes similar modules on the topics of creativity, self, social development, behavior guidance, families, program management, and professionalism. (DR)

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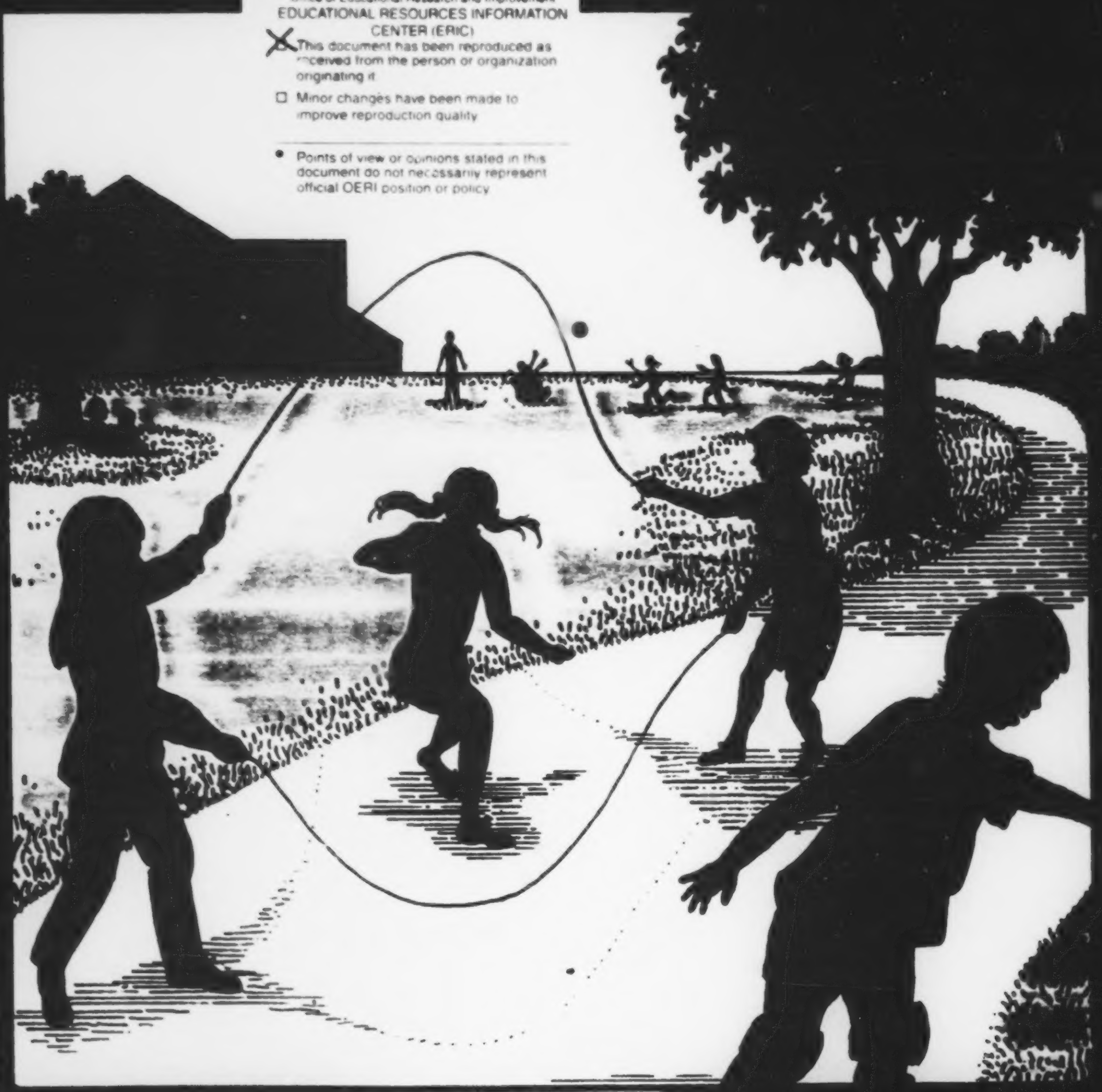

Volume I

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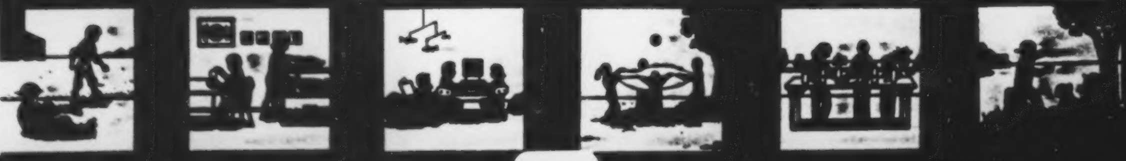

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs

Volume I

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Caring for Children in School-Age Programs is based on a set of training materials originally developed for the U.S. Army Child and Youth Services. It is the last in Teaching Strategies' series of competency-based training programs that includes: *Caring for Infants and Toddlers, Caring for Preschool Children,* and *Caring for Children in Family Child Care.* All of these materials are organized into 13 modules that address the competencies required to provide a quality program.

Many individuals contributed to the development of these training materials. First, we would like to acknowledge M.-A. Lucas, Chief of Army Child and Youth Services, who recognized the important role school-age programs play in the lives of children and initiated the development of this training. Next, we want to thank Dr. Victoria Moss, Program Manager, Supplemental Programs and Services, Department of the Army, who guided the development of the training modules and provided us with constructive and helpful suggestions that greatly improved the program. In addition, we are grateful to P. K. Tomlinson and Linda Harwanko, Education Program Specialists, Department of the Army, who reviewed and gave extensive feedback on the modules. The following Service representatives also reviewed and provided input that enriched these training materials: Keith Painter, Recreation Specialist, Department of the Army; Carolee Van Horn, Community Recreation Specialist, Department of the Navy; Madeline Wagner, Communication Recreation Specialist, The Marine Corps; and Mary Alice Howe, Child Development and Youth Specialist, Department of the Air Force. Dr. Charles H. Flatter, Professor, Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland, provided us with initial guidance on the development of the modules.

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs was reviewed by Ellen Gannett, Associate Director, and Susan O'Connor, Research Associate, School-Age Child Care Project at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College. Their critique of each module and suggestions for enhancing the content were invaluable. Ellen and Susan also verified the linkages between this training program and the criteria outlined in *Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality*. We are indebted to each of them for taking a strong interest in this project and sharing their expertise so generously.

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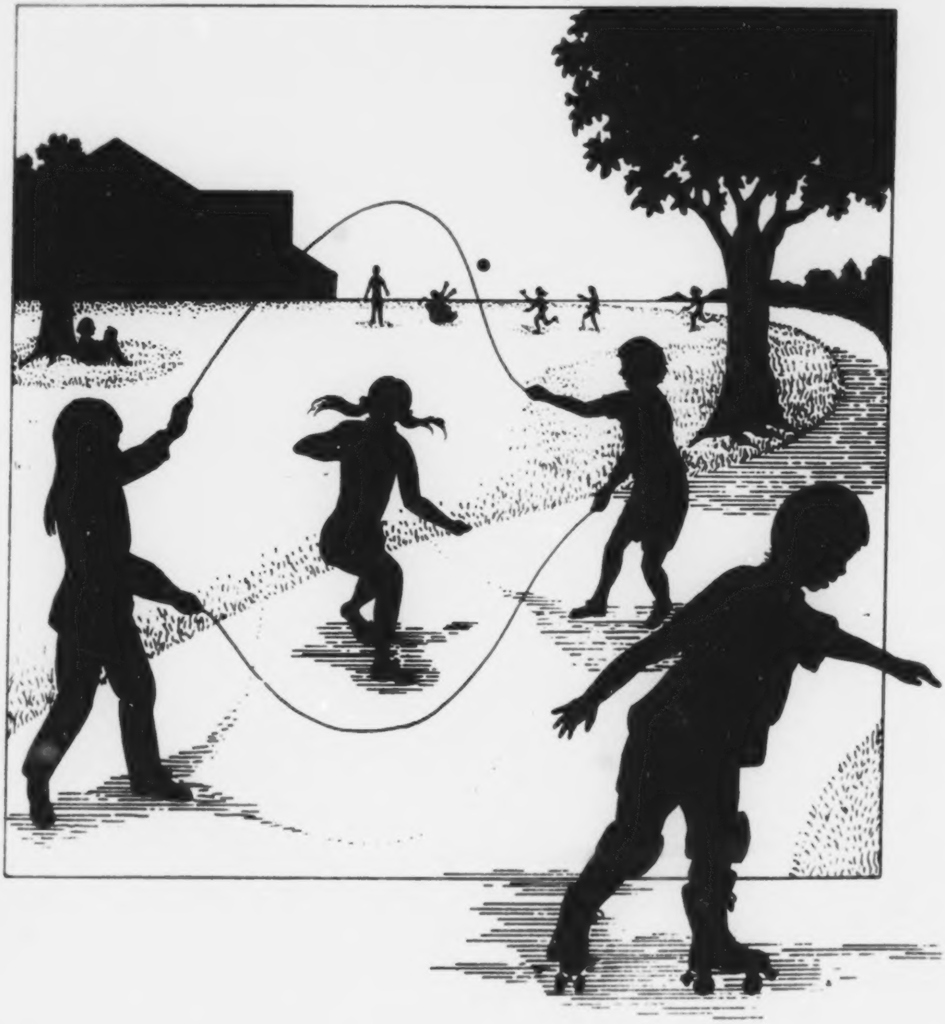
It is our hope that as school-age staff undertake this training program they will gain knowledge and develop new skills that will allow them to offer the highest quality of programming. We also hope this training will lead to greater understanding of how school-age programs encourage and support children's development, allow them to explore and build on their interests, and help them grow into competent, independent, and productive citizens.



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OVERVIEW

You are about to begin a unique and personalized training program designed to help you acquire the skills and knowledge to provide a high-quality program for school-age children. Whether you are new to the profession or have years of experience, this training program offers practical information on topics central to working with school-age children.

Working in a school-age program is more than a job. You are part of an important profession, one with an established body of knowledge and nationally-recognized standards. You can take pride in the important role you play in the lives of children. High quality school-age programs can benefit children now and in the future. Skilled staff can help children learn to get along with others and communicate ideas and feelings. By participating in a wide variety of recreational activities children develop skills, interests, and talents they can pursue throughout their lives.

How the Training Program Can Help You

As an adult, you bring years of experience that will help you to provide a quality program for children during their out-of-school hours. Once you begin this training program, you will find you already have many skills addressed in the modules. Completing the modules will enable you to extend and expand on the skills and knowledge you already have. The training will help you meet the profession's standards. As a result, you will find working with school-age children to be more and more rewarding.

One of the major factors in achieving a high-quality program is the specialized training available for staff. *Caring for Children in School-Age Programs* is designed to provide this specialized training. Children change every day as they grow and develop new skills and interests. Therefore, information is provided on the typical developmental stages of children in three age groups: 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12. The modules include many examples of how you can apply this knowledge to plan and implement your program. The more you know about children, the more effective you can be in developing a positive relationship with each child.

The Content Addressed in the Training Program

Training designed to improve knowledge and skills is called "competency-based" training. The knowledge and skills for working with children under five years of age have been defined as 13 "functional areas" by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. They are known as the Child Development Associate (CDA) Competency Standards.

To develop *Caring for Children in School-Age Programs*, we used these same 13 areas to define the content. We asked experts in school-age care to help identify the most important skills in each of the 13 functional areas. We used their input to define the topics you will study as you go through the training program.

Additionally, we reviewed standards for school-age programs as defined in the following publications:

> *Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality* (School-Age Child Care Project, Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College)
>
> *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs* and *Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care Programs* (Project Home Safe)
>
> *Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care* (National Association of Elementary School Principals)

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs addresses the criteria in these standards that apply to the knowledge and skills needed to provide a quality program.

How the Training Program Works

Your first step in this training program will be to take a self-assessment. This self-assessment is **not** a test. It is designed to introduce you to the major topics covered in each module and help you identify which topics you want to learn about first.

Before you begin the training program your trainer will observe you working with children. Observation is an important training tool. Trainers use observations throughout the training program to give you feedback on your progress in applying the skills and knowledge gained as you work on the modules. Together with your trainer you will review the observation notes and the results of the self-assessment and develop a plan that will work for you.

Some people are concerned when they see the size of the training program. Do not be alarmed. You can take one module at a time and pace yourself. Once you finish one module, you will be familiar with the approach. This will help you work through and apply what you learn in the remaining modules.

While the modules are designed to be self-instructional, it is best if you can work with an experienced trainer. A trainer can review and discuss your responses to the learning activities, answer your questions, and discuss your plans for applying new skills and knowledge.

There are five steps you will follow for each of the modules. These steps are described below.

Complete the overview.

The **overview** introduces and defines the topic addressed in the module. You learn why the topic is important and review concrete examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in that functional area. Three short situations demonstrate how school-age staff apply skills in this area. After reading these, you answer questions to help you learn more about the topic. The last activity in the overview asks you to relate the topic to your own experiences as an adult.

Do the pre-training assessment.

The **pre-training assessment** is a list of the key skills competent staff should possess in each area. You indicate whether you use a skill regularly, sometimes, or not enough. After completing the assessment, you identify three to five skills to improve or topics you wish to learn more about. Before beginning the learning activities you discuss the overview and the pre-training assessment with your trainer.

Complete each learning activity.

Each module has four to six **learning activities**. The activities begin with objectives—what you will learn—and several pages of information about the topic. After completing the reading, you apply what you learned to work with the children in your program. This may involve answering questions, completing a checklist, trying out suggestions you have read, planning an activity, or taking notes and thinking about your observations of children. When you have completed each learning activity, arrange a time to meet with your trainer to discuss the activity and to receive feedback. For some activities, you also meet with colleagues to discuss what you did and what you learned.

Summarize your progress.

After you have completed all the learning activities in the module, you review the pre-training assessment and **summarize your progress**. You then meet with your trainer to discuss your progress and to determine whether you are ready to be assessed.

Complete the assessment process.

Your trainer will give you the **knowledge and competency assessments**. On the knowledge assessment, you must achieve a score of 80 percent before going on to a new module. For the competency assessment, your trainer observes you working with children to assess your competence in the functional area. Some competency assessments must take place at a specific time. For example, the competency assessment for Module 11, Families, should take place at drop-off or pick-up time, when parents are present. After you have completed both assessments you and your trainer discuss whether you have successfully completed the module. If you need to spend more time on the module, your trainer may suggest activities to help you gain the skills needed to demonstrate competence.

You can expect to spend about four to six weeks on each module. Generally, it takes 12 to 18 months to thoroughly complete the training program.

What Makes the Training Program Unique

Several features of the training program make it unique.

- The materials are appropriate for new as well as experienced staff.
- You will receive your own set of materials that become your personal resource and journal for working with children.
- You take responsibility for your progress through the training program with guidance and feedback provided by a trainer.
- The information presented in the modules is practical and of immediate use in your daily work with children.
- Many of the learning activities ask you to observe children to learn about their skills and interests. Observation is a key way to get to know children and to plan ways to respond to each child as an individual.

When you have completed the training program, you will have the skills and knowledge to plan and implement a program designed for school-age children. You will be able to:

- create an environment and plan activities that complement children's experiences in school;
- give children opportunities to make choices;
- involve children in planning the program;
- offer a balance of educational and recreational activities to meet different interests, skills, and needs.

Before You Begin

Take a few minutes to review the **glossary** on the following page. It defines the words and phrases used throughout the training program. The glossary is followed by a bibliography of suggested resources on school-age programs and a list of publishers and distributors of resources. You may find the recommended resources in your program's library, or you may want to collect some for your own professional library. The self-assessment comes after the list of publishers and distributors of resources.

When you are ready, take the self-assessment and begin planning your training.

Please Note: Throughout the modules we use stories and examples to clarify and illustrate the content. While in many school-age programs, children call the staff by their first names, in these modules we refer to them by their last names to distinguish them from the children in the stories. When the children address staff members, they use their first names.

GLOSSARY

Competencies	Those tasks, skills, attitudes, and values needed to provide a high-quality school-age program. Competencies differ from knowledge in that competencies describe a staff member's actions and performance.
Competency assessments	The performance-based section of the assessment process. For the competency assessments, staff demonstrate their skills while working with children.
Developmentally appropriate	Ensuring that the environment, activities, and adult interactions with children reflect the predictable changes that occur as children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively and respond to each child's unique differences. Developmentally appropriate practice is age, individually, and culturally appropriate.
Developmental stages	All the stages a child passes through as he or she gains social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills.
Environment	The indoor and outdoor space regularly available for the program. It includes furniture, materials, equipment, the schedule and routines followed, and the interactions of children and adults.
Functional areas	The 13 major categories of tasks or functions used as the framework for this training program. Each module addresses a functional area in which a staff member must demonstrate competence in order to complete the training program.
Knowledge assessment	The paper-and-pencil exercises of the assessment process, testing knowledge of the concepts presented in the module.
Observation	The act of systematically watching and objectively taking notes on what a child says and does. The purpose is to learn more about that child in order to plan activities that reflect the child's needs, strengths, and interests and to interact with the child in ways that encourage development.
Pre-training assessment	Used at the beginning of each module by a staff member and a trainer to identify what skills the staff member has and where more training is needed.
School-age children	Children from 5 (kindergarten) to 12 (sixth grade) years old.

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General Topics

Activities for School-Age Child Care, Barbara Blakley, et. al. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989). This resource includes hundreds of activities for children ages 5 through 10. Suggestions for working with parents are included.

All the Best Contests for Kids, Joan Bergstrom (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1990). This book describes 120 contests for children between the ages of 6 and 12. Interested children can demonstrate their skills in photography, writing, jump roping, dancing, art, sewing, and computers.

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children, Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989). This book contains many practical suggestions for helping adults understand how biases are unintentionally conveyed to children and how to minimize, deal with, and even eliminate those biases.

Caring for School-Age Children, Phyllis Click (Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers Inc., 1994). This book is directed to front-line staff who work with school-age children. There are chapters on how children grow and develop, budgeting, planning, and the environment. Section II addresses all aspects of the curriculum. The final section of the book discusses the community and how to involve representatives in the program.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8, Sue Bredekamp, ed. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1987). This publication defines standards for quality in programs for children up to age eight. Describes strategies staff can use to support growth and development.

Half a Childhood: Time for School-Age Child Care, Judith Bender, Barbara Elder, and Charles H. Flatter (Nashville, TN: School-Age NOTES, 1984). This book provides a broad overview of what school-age children are like and how programs can meet their needs. Suggested equipment and materials, activities, and schedules are included. Appendices address the needs of children at both ends of the age spectrum—5-year-olds and 12-year-olds.

How to Play With Kids, J. Therrell (Pacifica, CA: Play Today Press, 1989). This resource presents strategies for leading children's play and stresses the importance of leaders becoming actively involved in playing games with children.

MegaSkills, Dorothy Rich (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1993). MegaSkills are the ten basic values, attitudes, and behaviors used by successful individuals in school, on the job, at home, in the family, and in the community. Though written for parents, there are many strategies school-age staff can use to help children develop skills such as confidence, motivation, initiative, and perseverance.

School-Age Children With Special Needs: What Do They Do When School Is Out?, Dale Fink (Boston, MA: Exceptional Parent Press, 1988). This book discusses the child care needs of school-age children with disabilities and offers suggestions for meeting these needs.

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs, Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley (Nashville, TN: School-Age NOTES, 1990). This book includes helpful hints and strategies along with over 140 program-tested activities and games. There are ideas on shared space, scheduling, programming for older children, clubs, summer themes, and field trips.

School's Out, Now What?, Joan Bergstrom (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1984). This guide suggests ways parents and other adults can provide practical help and guidance to school-age children. Checklists, resources, and hundreds of ideas are included.

Health and Safety

Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, American Public Health Association (Washington, DC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (Elk Grove Village, Illinois), 1992. A comprehensive volume that defines the standards and rationale for ensuring children's health and safety in child care programs.

Cup Cooking and *Cup Cooking Starter Set*, Barbara Johnson and Betty Plemons (Lake Alfred, FL: Early Educators Press, 1985). Offers single-serving recipes children can prepare themselves. Includes illustrations to explain the steps involved in measuring and mixing ingredients.

Learning Through Cooking: A Cooking Program for Children Two to Ten, Nancy J. Ferreira (Palo Alto, CA: R & E Research Associates, 1982). This resource offers recipes, explains the skills and concepts learned through cooking, and includes sample forms for planning and evaluating cooking projects.

Model Child Care Health Policies, PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1993). These model policies provide an excellent starting point for writing health policies. The policies can be obtained on a computer disk so that programs can adapt and reproduce them.

A Sigh of Relief, Martin I. Green (New York: Bantam, 1984). A first-aid resource for child care programs on how to respond to childhood emergencies. Focuses on prevention, includes numerous safety checklists and first-aid instructions that are clearly illustrated.

What You Should Know About Contagious Diseases in Day Care Settings, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, and Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control, 1984). Contains a practical and descriptive listing of all major childhood illnesses, how they are spread, and measures for prevention. (Currently out-of-print. An updated version will be out in 1996 titled, *ABCs of Safe and Healthy Child Care.*)

Program Environment

Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work, Jim Greenman (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press Inc., 1988). Shows how to create environments that make use of space creatively and with attention to children's developmental needs. Richly illustrated with photographs showing children using indoor and outdoor space.

Children's Play and Playgrounds, J.L. Frost and B.L. Klein (Austin, TX: Playground International, 1979). Describes how to design and build safe playgrounds and includes useful checklists with hundreds of photographs and illustrations.

Physical

Beyond Winning, Lawrence Rowen (Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1990). This book describes 40 fun games for athletes and non-athletes. The games emphasize teamwork and creativity. Included are techniques for helping children overcome fears related to sports and strategies for reducing aggression.

The Cooperative Sports and Games Book and *The Second Cooperative Games Book*, Terry Orlick (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978 and 1982). Both books provide directions for cooperative games aimed at helping adults and children work together rather than compete against each other. The games are new, adapted versions of familiar games, and games borrowed from other cultures. Children can have fun and build physical skills without worrying about winning and losing.

Easy Woodstuff for Kids, David Thompson (Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 1981). This woodworking primer shows how children can be creative using sticks, branches, and wood leftovers and scraps; includes detailed instructions for each project.

Elementary Teacher's Handbook of Indoor and Outdoor Games, Art Kamiya (West Nyack, NY: Parker Publishing Company, 1985). Although written for elementary teachers, this resource is also a favorite of school-age staff. The 300 games and activities in this volume stress cooperation, group problem-solving, and development of physical skills. Each description includes a suggested age range.

Feeling Strong, Feeling Free: Movement Exploration for Young Children, Molly Sullivan (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1982). A step-by-step approach to planning movement activities for children up to age 8. Describes the value of movement experiences and how to plan and introduce them to children.

Great Games to Play With Groups, Frank W. Harris (Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1990). A wide selection of games from around the world are featured in this book. Instructions are provided for more than 70 games.

Incredible Indoor Games Book and *Outrageous Outdoor Game Book*, Bob Gregson (Belmont, CA: David S. Lake Publishers, 1982). These books are excellent resources on games to play when everyone is tired of the old standbys. Soon the games described in these books will become the children's new favorites.

Indoor Action Games for Elementary Children, James M. Foster and David L. Overholt (West Nyack, NY: Parker Publishing Company, 1989). The games in this book encourage children to be actively involved, even when space is limited. This is a good resource for rainy or cold days when children can't play outdoors.

Kid Fitness. Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., M.P.H. (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991). This book focuses on the physical development of school-age children and includes tips for encouraging children to participate in appropriate fitness activities and follow diets based on good nutrition. Menus and recipes are included. Although written for parents, this resource includes much useful information for school-age program staff.

Cognitive, Communication, and Creative

Hug a Tree, Robert E. Rockwell, Elizabeth A. Sherwood, and Robert A. Williams (Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 1983). Each outdoor learning experience has a suggested age level, a clear description of the activity, and suggestions for follow-up learning.

Growing Up Creative, Teresa Amabile (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1989). Written for parents, this book explains Amabile's theories about creativity and offers strategies for keeping children's creativity alive. Suggested practices are applicable to school-age program settings.

Make Mine Music, Tom Walther (Boston, MA: Little Brown, and Company, 1981). This resource presents the view that everyone can make music. It includes ideas for making musical instruments from materials commonly found in our everyday environment.

Mudpies to Magnets, Robert Williams, et. al. (Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 1987). This is a collection of hands-on activities that allow children to explore science concepts.

Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice, Howard Gardner (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993). In this book, Gardner explains his theory of multiple intelligences and describes how to apply the theories to help children develop to their full potential.

The Outside Play and Learning Book, Karen Miller (Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 1989). A comprehensive and creative collection of outdoor activities that includes many suggestions for making good use of the outdoor environment in all seasons.

Self, Social, and Guidance

Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity with Young Children, Bonnie Neugebauer, Ed. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992). A series of articles offering thoughtful advice and approaches to meeting the needs of all children. Also addresses diversity issues related to staffing, living in a changing world, and resources.

Creative Conflict Resolution, William J. Kriedler (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1984). This book describes conflict resolution techniques, activities, and cooperative games for school-age children. There are practical strategies children can use to improve their communication skills, understand and settle their own disputes, and deal with strong feelings in useful ways.

The Difficult Child, Stanley Turecki, M.D. and Leslie Tonner (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1986). Written primarily for parents, this book describes the inborn behavioral characteristics of children. It offers help in identifying and understanding specific difficulties at each stage of development. There are practical suggestions for responding to conflicts and tips for reducing stress in adults and children.

Greater Expectations: Overcoming the Culture of Indulgence in America's Homes and Schools, William Damon (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995). Written in response to what the author believes has been an overemphasis on misguided efforts to promote self-esteem, Damon advocates providing children with meaningful challenges, moral guidance, and opportunities to serve others. He stresses the importance of the quality of interactions between adults and children.

How to Raise Children's Self-Esteem, Harris Clemens and Reynold Bean (Los Angeles, CA: Price/Stern/Sloan, 1980). A practical description of self-esteem; why it is important; the reasons for children's behavior; and how adults can help children gain a positive sense of self.

The Kid's Guide to Social Action, Barbara A. Lewis (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishers, 1991). This book includes step-by-step instructions for letter-writing, fundraising, interviewing, making speeches, and getting media coverage. The resource section includes addresses and phone numbers of government offices and national organizations. Stories about children's accomplishments are included.

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Playground Politics, Stanley Greenspan (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993). Dr. Greenspan, child psychiatrist and author, reviews the stages of normal emotional development for school-age children and offers suggestions for parents on how to assist their children in handling typical problems and challenges. These strategies can be adapted by school-age program staff as they help children master social skills.

Your Child's Self-Esteem, Dorothy Corkille Briggs (Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books, 1975). Focuses on the importance of self-image, how it develops, and how adults can support children's self-esteem.

Families, Program Management, and Professionalism

Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality, Susan O'Connor, et. al. (Wellesley, MA: School-Age Child Care Project, Wellesley Center for Research on Women, 1991). ASQ is a comprehensive manual that guides school-age programs through a self-evaluation of all aspects of program operations. Implementing ASQ involves a team of staff, parents, children, and community members.

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Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy, Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988). Helps demystify advocacy by providing practical ideas and examples of how to influence policies for children, families, and professionals who work with children.

Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care, National Association of Elementary School Principals and Wellesley School-Age Child Care Project (Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1993). Although directed to elementary school principals, this resource provides valuable information for all school-age programs, regardless of setting or sponsoring group. Standards of excellence and quality indicators are provided for a number of program elements including staff-child relationships, staff-parent relationships, developmental programming, materials, equipment, and supplies. Appendices include a checklist for applying the standards and a bibliography for further reading.

Survival Guide: School-Age Child Care, Betsy Arns (Huntington Beach, CA: School-Age Workshops Press, 1988). Contains practical suggestions and information related to program start-up and administration, developmental stages of school-age children, staff training, and daily programming issues.

3:00 to 6:00 p.m.: Young Adolescents at Home and in the Community, Leah Lefstein, et. al. (Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina, 1982). This book focuses on the elements of effective programs for 10- to 15-year-olds. Profiles of successful programs for this age group are included.

Activity and Resource Books for School-Age Children and Staff

Adventures in Art, Susan Milord (Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1990). This book includes 100 projects children can carry out alone or with friends. Although directed to children, staff will find it a rich resource for planning arts and crafts activities. Information on art history and the cultural source of different techniques and types of art are provided for each activity. Many activities are adaptations of crafts representative of different cultures.

Hands Around the World, Susan Milord (Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1992). The introduction to this book describes how the book includes 365 activities, one for each day in the Gregorian calendar. It goes on to explain, however, that other calendars are also used throughout the world—for example, the 4,690 year-old Chinese calendar and the Islamic calendar. This approach and level of detail is typical of the entire book—a collection of activities that introduce and celebrate cultural diversity.

Jump! The New Jump Rope Book, Susan Kalbfleisch (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1985). Novice and experienced jumpers can use this book to learn basic and advanced steps and routines. Simple drawings make the instructions easy to understand.

The Kid's Address Book, Michael Levine (New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1992). Place this book in the quiet area with some paper, pens, and envelopes, and soon children will be writing letters to their favorite authors or athletes and to learn more about the world beyond their local community. Addresses are provided for individual actors, singers, sports figures, and cartoon characters. There are also addresses for recording companies, sports teams, television networks, businesses, clubs and organizations for children, publishers, and government and world leaders.

The Kids Can Help Book, Suzanne Logan (New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1992). This resource can be used by children and staff to identify opportunities for involvement in community, national, and international social service efforts. Included is a comprehensive directory of organizations and examples of how children's efforts have made a difference.

Kids Club, A School-Age Program Guide for Directors, Linda G. Sisson (Nashville, TN: School-Age NOTES, 1990). This guide provides basic information on how to operate a child-centered school-age program. Topics addressed include the environment, activities, routines, field trips, supervision, parent communication, and resources. Numerous sample forms and checklists are provided.

Kids Create, Laurie Carlson (Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1990). Art and craft projects for children ages 3 through 9 are included in this book. Illustrated instructions are provided for a wide variety of activities that allow younger school-age children to exercise their creativity while making something "real."

A Kid's Guide to Building Forts, Tom Birdseye (Tucson, AZ: Harbinger House, 1993). This book includes illustrated instructions for building indoor and outdoor forts of many kinds. The outdoor forts described include a lean-to, teepee, and igloo. Indoors, children can make forts with furniture and coverings or with appliance boxes.

The Kids' Nature Book, Susan Milord (Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1989). This book includes suggestions for crafts, experiments, and games that make use of or encourage involvement with nature. Included are 365 separate activities, one for each day of the year, organized by weekly themes. The appendices list sources for supplies, nature conservancy groups, and additional resources for children and staff.

More Free Stuff for Kids (Deephaven, MN: Meadowbrook Press, 1993). This book taps into several prime interests of school-age children—"collecting," learning more about the world beyond home and family, and receiving their own mail. The items described are free or cost no more than a dollar (with a few exceptions). Children can write away for stickers, buttons, postcards, stamps, craft kits, or to learn more about another country.

More Science Experiments You Can Eat, Vicki Cobb (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1979). Many food preparation activities are excellent opportunities to learn about scientific principles. Children can use this book to learn about ripening fruit, making cottage cheese, and finding out which areas of the tongue are sensitive to different tastes. Each experiment includes a list of materials and equipment and step-by-step procedures for "scientists."

Mudworks, Creative Clay, Dough, and Modeling Experiences, Mary Ann Kohl (Bellingham, WA: Bright Ring Publishing, 1989). Over 100 open-ended ways to engage children in modeling experiences; includes clearly written recipes in a format that gives appropriate guidance to adults.

Sportworks, Ontario Science Centre (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1989). This book encourages children to learn about science while exercising, burning calories, and developing physical skills. The activities allow children to explore topics such as gravity, muscles, warming up before exercising, and why curve balls curve.

Steven Caney's Play Book, Steven Caney (New York, NY: Workman Publishing Group, 1975). This classic publication includes a wide variety of indoor and outdoor projects, games, and activities children can undertake alone or with others. Most of the projects are appropriate for even the youngest school-age children and make use of materials and equipment a typical school-age program would have on hand.

The Victory Garden Kid's Book, Marjorie Waters (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1988). The first section of this book includes a step-by-step guide to starting a garden. Children learn how to test their soil for lead, make compost, start seeds in peat pots, plant seedlings, and care for their plants throughout the growing season. The second section includes instructions for growing a number of vegetables, fruits, and flowers.

Sources of Pen Pals for School-Age Children[1]

Caravan House, 132 E. 65th Street, New York, NY 10021. This organization publishes a twice-yearly *Pen Friend Guide,* listing the names, addresses, ages, and interests of children who would like to be pen pals.

Children's Better Health Institute, P. O. Box 567, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Eight to 12-year-old children from the United States can send their name, address, and age to this organization. They will be included in a list of children wanting to become pen pals. Lists are distributed to interested children.

Creative Kids, P. O. Box 6448, Mobile, AL 36660. This magazine includes a list of children interested in being penpals.

International Penfriends, P. O. Box 340, Dublin 12, Ireland. Children ages 8 and over can write to this organization. They will receive a list of ten children who are looking for pen pals.

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[1] From Amity Kaye Horowitz, *Serious Fun* (McLean, VA: EPM Publishers, 1988).

PUBLISHERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF RESOURCES

The following organizations are publishers and distributors of resources for school-age professionals. Write or call to receive a copy of the most recent catalog.

Boy Scouts of America, 13425 Walnut Hill Lane, Irving, TX 75015-2079 (214-580-2000). *Boy's Life Monthly, Scouting Magazine* (for leaders), and *Exploring* are three useful publications from this national group. In addition, they publish books and pamphlets on a wide range of topics.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 1230 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30309 (404-815-5700). This national youth development organization has more than 1300 clubs serving almost two million boys and girls. The national office can provide resources on topics such as drug prevention, career exploration, fine arts, photography, and recreation.

Camp Fire, Inc., 4601 Madison Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64112 (816-756-1950). This national group publishes a leadership magazine and a wide variety of manuals, youth program books, and guides for leaders.

Center for Early Adolescence, D-2 Carr Mill Town Center, Carrboro, NC 27510 (919-966-1148). The Center serves as a clearinghouse for information on youth ages 10 to 15. It is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of agencies and professionals who work with this age group. Resources include a newsletter, training and resource manuals, and pamphlets.

Creative Education Surplus, 9801 James Circle, Suite C, Bloomington, MN 55431 (612-884-6427). This is your source for a wide variety of surplus items children can use for crafts and other projects. For example, a recent catalog featured Velcro, pom poms, a jumbo jar of Technicolor™ tissue paper, animal noses, stretchy fishnet, date stamps, United States and world maps, dental mirrors, and divided trays.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018 (212-852-8000). This organization offers numerous publications on a variety of topics related to out-of-school programming for children and youth.

Gryphon House, P. O. Box 207, Beltsville, MD 20704-0207 (1-800-638-0928). This company publishes and distributes resources for child care professionals. School-age resources are featured in their catalog.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1509 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426 (1-800-424-2460). NAEYC publishes numerous reasonably-priced resources on topics of interest to school-age program staff. If you join NAEYC, you will receive their journal, *Young Children*, which has a wealth of articles on caring for children ages birth through eight. Their annual conference, held in November, features a separate track of presentations targeted to school-age program staff.

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483 (703-684-3345). NAESP, a membership organization of elementary school principals, conducts research on issues related to school-age children, sponsors conferences, publishes a newsletter and standards for quality schools and child care.

National 4-H Council, Program Youth Development, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 (301-961-2897). The Council serves children and youth ages 9 to 19 and provides resources related to citizenship, leadership, self-esteem, and life skills. County 4-H offices can provide resource materials on these topics.

Redleaf Press, Resources for Child Caring, 450 North Syndicate, Suite 5, St. Paul, MN 55104-4125 (1-800-423-8309). In addition to a wide variety of resources on general child care topics, this company features a special section of resources for school-age care.

School-Age Child Care Project, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8259 (617-283-2547). This project provides technical assistance, information and referral and training for school-age program administrators and staff. They publish and disseminate a wide range of materials.

School-Age NOTES, P. O. Box 40205, Nashville, TN 37204-0205 (615-242-8464). This group has been a national resource organization on school-age care since 1980. Publications include a newsletter devoted to topics of interest to school-age program administrators and staff. In addition, they publish and distribute numerous publications, all related to school-age programs.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Safe			
a. Maintaining indoor and outdoor environments that reduce and prevent accidents and injuries.	☐	☐	☐
b. Planning for and responding to accidents and emergencies.	☐	☐	☐
c. Helping children develop habits that will reduce and prevent accidents and injuries.	☐	☐	☐
2. Healthy			
a. Maintaining indoor and outdoor environments that promote wellness and reduce the spread of disease.	☐	☐	☐
b. Encouraging children to develop habits that promote good hygiene and nutrition.	☐	☐	☐
c. Recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.	☐	☐	☐
3. Program Environment			
a. Organizing indoor and outdoor areas to support a variety of activities.	☐	☐	☐
b. Selecting and arranging developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.	☐	☐	☐
c. Planning and implementing a schedule and routines to meet children's developmental and individual needs.	☐	☐	☐

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
4. Physical			
a. Reinforcing and encouraging physical development through an appropriate environment, activities, and interactions.	☐	☐	☐
b. Providing equipment and opportunities for gross motor development.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing equipment and opportunities for fine motor development.	☐	☐	☐
5. Cognitive			
a. Creating an interesting and varied environment that encourages children to experiment and make discoveries.	☐	☐	☐
b. Interacting with children in ways that build on their natural curiosity.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing opportunities for children to use their growing skills.	☐	☐	☐
6. Communication			
a. Creating a varied environment that encourages children to develop and use communication skills.	☐	☐	☐
b. Interacting with children in ways that encourage them to express their ideas and feelings.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing opportunities for children to use their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	☐	☐	☐

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
7. **Creative**			
a. Providing a rich and varied environment that invites exploration and experimentation.	☐	☐	☐
b. Offering a variety of activities and experiences that promote self-expression.	☐	☐	☐
c. Interacting with children in ways that encourage and respect original ideas, thoughts, and expressions.	☐	☐	☐
8. **Self**			
a. Developing a positive and supportive relationship with each child.	☐	☐	☐
b. Helping children accept and appreciate themselves and others.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing children with opportunities to be successful and feel competent.	☐	☐	☐
9. **Social**			
a. Encouraging children to develop friendships and enjoy being with their peers.	☐	☐	☐
b. Helping children understand and respect the feelings of others.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing an environment and experiences that help children develop social skills.	☐	☐	☐

		I Do This	
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Guidance			
a. Providing an environment that encourages children's self-discipline.	☐	☐	☐
b. Using positive methods to guide individual children.	☐	☐	☐
c. Helping children understand and express their feelings in acceptable ways.	☐	☐	☐
11. Families			
a. Communicating with parents often to exchange information about their child at home and at the program.	☐	☐	☐
b. Offering a variety of ways for parents to participate in their child's life at the program.	☐	☐	☐
c. Providing support to families.	☐	☐	☐
12. Program Management			
a. Observing and recording information about each child's growth and development.	☐	☐	☐
b. Working as a member of a team to plan an individualized program.	☐	☐	☐
c. Following administrative policies and procedures.	☐	☐	☐
13. Professionalism			
a. Continually assessing one's own performance.	☐	☐	☐
b. Continuing to learn about working with school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
c. Applying professional ethics at all times.	☐	☐	☐

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PLAN

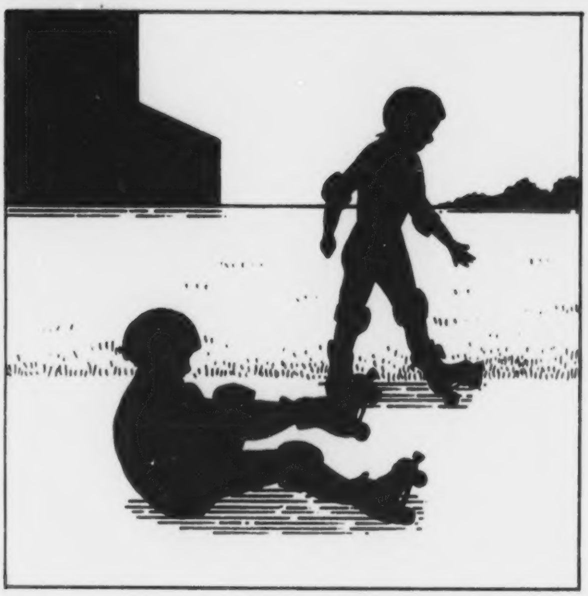
Review your responses to the self-assessment with your trainer. What do you feel are your strengths, interests, and needs? Decide which areas you would like to work on first. Select three modules to begin with and set target dates for their completion. (Your trainer can let you know how much work is involved for each module.) Record the module titles and target completion dates below. You may also wish to determine a tentative schedule for completing *Caring for Children in School-Age Programs.*

Module	**Target Completion Date**
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Tentative schedule for completion of the *Caring for Children in School-Age Programs* Training Program:

Module	**Date**

Staff	Date	Trainer	Date



Module 1: SAFE

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OVERVIEW

KEEPING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN SAFE INVOLVES:

- maintaining indoor and outdoor environments that reduce and prevent accidents and injuries;
- planning for and responding to accidents and emergencies; and
- helping children develop habits that will reduce and prevent accidents and injuries.

Adults feel safe when they are in control.

Safety is freedom from danger, and danger is minimized by reducing hazards that might cause an accident or emergency. You feel safe when you know:

- no great harm will come to you;
- you can do something to prevent dangerous situations; and
- those around you share your concern for safety and act in a cautious way.

Adults feel safe when they are in control of situations. They are in control when they prevent accidents and injuries and when they know what to do if accidents and injuries occur.

To feel safe, children must trust the important adults in their lives to prevent or reduce hazardous situations. They rely on adults to know what to do when accidents occur. As children become more independent, they can take steps to control their environment. They are better able to explore their world safely and to stay free from danger.

School-age children may take risks.

Although accidents are the leading cause of death among children, national studies indicate 95 percent of these accidents are preventable. Active and curious school-age children are often vulnerable to dangers in their environment. Risk-taking is common, especially for children who have entered the rapid growth period prior to adolescence. They are testing their new physical and mental abilities. Children may think, "Bad things happen to other people, not to me."

Staff are responsible for protecting children.

As a school-age staff member, you have a professional responsibility to protect children from harm. Your program has established procedures to ensure children's safety. As stated in the *Code of Ethical Conduct* of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Principal 1.1):[1]

> Above all we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitive, intimidating, psychologically damaging, or physically harmful to children.

Keeping school-age children safe involves creating a safe environment that has structure and clear limits but also encourages and supports exploration and risk-taking. It involves handling emergencies calmly and effectively. Through your actions, you help children develop positive attitudes about safety and learn how to keep themselves safe.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in keeping children safe.

Maintaining Indoor And Outdoor Environments That Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

Follow the program's security procedures that limit access to building entrances.

Monitor children's arrivals and departures.

Check indoor and outdoor areas daily and remove trash, hazardous materials, and sharp or broken objects.

Check the room daily to be sure all electrical cords are kept away from water and walkways.

Check materials and equipment daily for broken parts, loose bolts, or jagged edges, and make sure they are repaired or replaced.

Check monthly to see that safety equipment and supplies (for example, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and first aid kits) are in place, easy to reach, and in good condition.

Use separate areas for active and quiet games and activities so children don't get in each other's way or bump into each other.

Arrange the room to allow for clear traffic paths and fire exits.

Follow the program's requirements for adult-child ratios and group sizes (recommended ratios are 1:8 for children under 6 and 1:10 - 1:15 for children 6 and older).

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[1] Stephanie Feeney and Kenneth Kipnis, *Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990), p. 5.

Supervise children and know where they are and what they are doing at all times.

Limit access to supplies and equipment that could be dangerous when used by children who do not know how to use them safely.

Clean and properly store equipment and supplies when not in use.

Make sure the telephone is easy to get to and is working properly.

Planning for and Responding to Accidents and Emergencies

Respond quickly and calmly to children in distress.

Develop and post accident and emergency procedures.

Know and follow established accident and emergency procedures.

Know where to find parents' emergency telephone numbers.

Maintain current emergency information on all children.

Follow established procedures for leading children to safety during fire and other hazard drills and in real emergencies, should they occur.

Take safety precautions in a calm and reassuring manner without overprotecting children or making them fearful.

Helping Children Develop Habits That Will Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

Talk with children about potential hazards in the environment, so they will learn how to prevent accidents. "Roxanne, the edge of this rug has some loose strings. Will you help me trim them so nobody gets a foot caught and trips?"

Involve children in making safety rules to minimize hazards. "Many of you are excited about using our new woodworking tools. What rules do you think we need to be sure no one gets hurt while using them?"

Encourage children to help each other remember the safety rules. "Bonnie, would you and Erica like to make a safety poster? We need to remind everyone to hang up their backpacks or put them in their cubbies. That would help us keep the entry way clear so no one trips and falls."

Show children how to use equipment and supplies properly, and model taking risks. Closely supervise children during potentially hazardous activities. "Diandre, this X-acto knife is very sharp.

When you use it, always cut away from your body so it won't slip and cut you."

Invite community representatives (fire or police) to talk with the children about safe practices. "Let's begin by talking about what you should do in a dangerous situation. For example, if you heard gunfire while walking to the store, what would you do?"

Teach children how to observe safety rules on neighborhood walks and field trips. "Raise your hand with your buddy and join your group leader."

Explain rules and procedures for sports and games clearly before play begins. "We've marked a safety zone where you can stand while you're waiting for your turn at bat. If you wait there, you won't be hit accidentally by the batter who's up before you."

Change the activity when children become too excited, angry, or tired to continue playing safely. "At the end of this inning, we'll stop the game for today and take a slow, walking lap around the field. Then I'll help you find something else to do."

Respond immediately when children are involved in unsafe play. "Jason and Pamela, please get down off the table. Do you remember why we came up with the rule about not standing on the furniture?"

Teach children proper procedures for cleaning up and storing equipment and supplies. "Kisha, can you put the chemicals for the science experiment back in the cabinet? Here is the key so you can lock up these materials until tomorrow." (The staff member should later check to be sure the cabinet is locked.)

Remind children of safety rules. "Mandy, you can ride a bicycle on the blacktop in the area marked with safety cones. The helmets are hanging next to the bikes."

Keeping Children Safe

In the following situations, school-age staff are ensuring children's safety. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

Mr. Sullivan and his colleagues arrive at the program before the children so they can do a safety check of the indoor and outdoor areas. Today he is scheduled to check the playground used by the program. He attaches a copy of the outdoor safety checklist to his clipboard and heads outdoors. Although it's a sunny day, last night's storm has left the playground littered with branches and twigs. He removes the branches and decides to ask the children to help pick up the twigs. Next, he runs his hands across the climber and feels underneath to make sure there are no splinters. The surface is a little rough under one timber so he makes a note to have it sanded before it becomes a potential hazard. The storm washed away some of the wood chips under the climber so he rakes them back in place. He sweeps away the standing water on the asphalt, checks the swings and slide, then sets up for the afternoon. Softball has been a favorite activity this week so he checks to make sure the field is dry enough for play. It is, so he uses the safety cones to mark a safe waiting area for the next batter. Before going back inside to greet the children he puts out more cones to mark a safety area at the bottom of the slide and around the swings.

1. What did Mr. Sullivan do to create a safe outdoor environment?

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2. What next steps does Mr. Sullivan need to take to make sure the outdoor environment is safe?

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Planning for and Responding to Accidents and Emergencies

Mr. Lopez and a group of children are playing T-ball. Cecelia is at bat. She hits the ball high over the heads of the shortstop and the second baseman and into the outfield. Tony and Gillian, the two outfielders, see the ball coming and run toward it shouting, "I've got it." As the ball lands on the grass beside them, the two children crash into each other and fall down. Mr. Lopez calls a "time out" and walks to the crying children. He asks them how they feel. Gillian says her head hurts and Tony just keeps crying. Mr. Lopez calls over the other children and says, "I need to take Tony and Gillian inside so they can get some ice. Ms. Kendrick, today's 'air traffic controller',* will come out so you can continue the game." After telling Ms. Kendrick she needs to go outside, he gets some ice from the refrigerator for Tony and Gillian to hold on their sore heads. While waiting to see if the ice helps he completes an accident report. Soon Tony and Gillian are feeling better and eager to go back to the game. He sends them back outside. Because the children have recovered, Mr. Lopez decides it is not necessary to call their parents. He does, however, write two short notes explaining the accident and asking the parents to be sure to read and sign the accident report. After putting the notes in the children's cubbies where the parents will see them, he returns to the game. Ms. Kendrick gives him a quick update and goes back inside to see who might need her help.

1. What did Mr. Lopez do to keep all the children safe?

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2. What did Mr. Lopez do after taking care of the children's injuries?

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*An 'air traffic controller' is a floating staff member who steps in to help when needed.

Helping Children Develop Habits That Will Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

Three sixth-grade girls, Stephanie, Rhonda, and Candy, have organized a Double Dutch Jump Rope Club. They are very excited about getting started. As soon as they arrive, they rush out to the asphalt area to begin jumping. Just as the girls are about to start twirling the jump ropes, Ms. Nelson notices something flickering on the asphalt. She goes over to Stephanie and says, "From where I was standing, I noticed something on the ground where you're going to be jumping. Now that I've had a closer look, I can see that it's broken glass. Before you begin jumping, you need to check the area for glass, loose gravel, or anything else that might make you fall or cut yourself." Stephanie responds, "We were so excited about the club, we didn't even notice!" Ms. Nelson tells the girls, "I can see this club is going to be a lot of fun. I know you want it to be safe, too. Why don't you make a list of safety rules for the club. The first one can be to check the jumping area every day before you begin, and sweep it if needed. When you think of others, you can add them to the list."

1. Why did Ms. Nelson think it was important for the girls to make safety rules for their club?

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2. How did the children learn to keep themselves safe?

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Need for Safety

Safety is a basic human need.

Everyone needs to feel safe. We particularly want to feel safe where we live and work. When we know we are protected from harm, we can function well. Safe environments make us feel secure, relaxed, confident, and able to enjoy ourselves. When we do not feel protected, we are fearful and anxious.

With the increasing level of violence in many communities today, especially random violence, it's difficult for many of us to feel safe. Children have the same fears as adults. They see violence on television and too often experience it in their homes and neighborhoods. Safety is an important issue for everyone.

When you are in charge of your environment, you can make it a safer one. You probably have experienced times when you were doing something that was potentially dangerous, and you did things to make that activity safer. Do you remember times when you:

- climbed a ladder while someone held it to keep it stable;
- parked your car at night in a well-lit area of the shopping mall; or
- carefully unplugged a lamp with a frayed cord, then had the wiring replaced?

Learning about safety begins in childhood.

You have learned about safety through experience. When you were a child, the important adults in your life controlled your environment to keep it safe. They helped you develop an attitude and habits concerning safety. As you grew older, they helped you learn what you could do to minimize dangerous situations.

Think of a situation where you didn't feel safe and describe it below.

What did you want to happen?

____

____

____

What can you learn from this experience that will help you keep children safe?

____

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As you work through this module, you will learn how to set up and maintain a safe environment. Safety is important in all aspects of school-age care—whether you are guiding children's learning, building self-esteem, or promoting self-discipline. Keeping children safe is one of your most important responsibilities.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to keep children safe. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries	I Do This Regularly	 Sometimes	 Not Enough
1. Following the program's security procedures that limit access to building entrances.	☐	☐	☐
2. Monitoring children's arrivals and departures.	☐	☐	☐
3. Checking indoor and outdoor areas daily for safety hazards.	☐	☐	☐
4. Conducting monthly safety checks, indoors and outdoors, to find out what needs to be repaired.	☐	☐	☐
5. Repairing faulty equipment immediately or removing it until it can be repaired.	☐	☐	☐
6. Checking monthly to be sure safety equipment and supplies are in place, easy to reach, and in good condition.	☐	☐	☐
7. Checking daily to see that equipment and supplies are cleaned up and stored safely.	☐	☐	☐
8. Limiting access to supplies and equipment for children who do not yet have the skills or judgment to use the items safely.	☐	☐	☐
9. Designating separate areas for active and quiet games and activities to avoid congestion and collisions.	☐	☐	☐
10. Arranging the environment so children and staff are visible at all times.	☐	☐	☐
11. Arranging the room so traffic paths and fire exits are clear.	☐	☐	☐

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries (continued)	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
12. Maintaining appropriate adult-child ratios and group sizes.	☐	☐	☐
13. Planning a daily schedule to include active and quiet play.	☐	☐	☐
14. Making sure the telephone is easy to get to and working properly.	☐	☐	☐
Planning for and Responding to Accidents and Emergencies			
15. Responding quickly and calmly to children in distress.	☐	☐	☐
16. Protecting and reassuring children during an emergency without overprotecting or scaring them.	☐	☐	☐
17. Developing and posting accident and emergency procedures.	☐	☐	☐
18. Knowing and following accident and emergency procedures.	☐	☐	☐
19. Knowing where to find parents' emergency phone numbers and maintaining current emergency information on all children.	☐	☐	☐
Helping Children Develop Habits That Will Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries			
20. Involving children in making the program's safety rules.	☐	☐	☐
21. Explaining rules and procedures for sports and games clearly before play begins.	☐	☐	☐
22. Responding immediately when children are involved in unsafe play.	☐	☐	☐

Helping Children Develop Habits That Will Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries (continued)	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
23. Inviting community representatives to talk with children about safe practices.	☐	☐	☐
24. Talking calmly with children about potential hazards in the environment.	☐	☐	☐
25. Teaching children proper procedures for using, cleaning up, and storing equipment and supplies.	☐	☐	☐
26. Showing children how to use equipment and supplies properly and modeling taking risks.	☐	☐	☐
27. Teaching children to observe safety rules on neighborhood walks and field trips.	☐	☐	☐
28. Reminding children of safety rules and encouraging them to remind each other.	☐	☐	☐
29. Changing the activities when children become too excited, angry, or tired to continue playing safely.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

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Begin the learning activities for Module 1, Safe.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.
Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- set up a safe learning environment for school-age children;
- take actions every day to help make the environment safe for children; and
- use a safety checklist to keep indoor and outdoor play areas safe.

Creating a safe environment can prevent accidents.

Your choice of materials and equipment and the way you arrange your space can reduce and prevent accidents and injuries. When the indoor and outdoor areas are safe, you can focus on what the children are doing, confident that the playground is free of broken glass and that materials and equipment are appropriate, sturdy, and in good repair.

During the school-age years, children gain many skills and learn to use sound judgment. However, as you work with these children, you will find that they can't always tell what is safe and what is dangerous. When children are excited, they can be impulsive: they may run around without noticing people or objects in their path, or grab and handle objects carelessly. They may be so anxious to try out new skills they forget to follow safety rules. Marty and Eduardo were so eager to have a bike race they forgot to wear their helmets. Emily and her friends were half-way through their gymnastic routines before remembering to put down a tumbling mat. You and your colleagues must observe closely and be prepared for the unexpected.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some general rules to follow in setting up a safe environment for school-age children.

- Set up interest areas using dividers low enough so you can easily see all children at all times.
- Secure or remove furniture that could fall or be pulled over.
- Use open shelves for storage; **not** chests with heavy lids that can fall on children.
- Store heavy items on bottom shelves of bookcases or cabinets so children don't pull heavy things down on themselves.
- Create a floor plan that allows children to move easily from one area to another and allows quick exiting in emergencies.

- Designate separate indoor and outdoor areas for different kinds of activities—quiet, active, noisy—so children don't bump into one another or get into physical disagreements.
- Inspect electrical cords and appliances to be sure they are in good condition.
- Know the location of fire extinguishers and how to use them.
- Examine materials and equipment regularly to make sure they are: nonflammable, non-toxic, free of sharp edges or splinters, and in good repair.
- Keep dangerous substances such as cleansers and chemicals in covered, safe containers that are plainly labeled. Store them in locked cabinets and make them available only to children who know how to use them safely.
- Locate activities using hazardous materials and equipment (such as melted wax, chemicals, hot oil, wood-working tools) away from traffic. When heating oil, make sure the pot or pan is below the level of children's faces.
- Use newspapers, dropcloths, or towels to control spills from sand and water play and "messy" activities. Limit the number of children who can participate at one time.
- Play ball games far away from streets so balls don't roll into them.
- Include in your written schedule the time during which each staff member will supervise a particular activity or area.

Use safety checklists regularly.

Now you have created a safe environment; the next step is to keep it that way. A safety checklist, used regularly, is a good tool for identifying potential hazards. Because children use materials and equipment continuously, wear and tear can make a once-safe item or area dangerous. Although you must assume full responsibility, children can help you identify problems. Some things are checked daily: unlocked cabinets, broken glass, and wet spots. Others are checked monthly: splintered baseball bats, loose table screws, and bolts that should be replaced.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you will invite two children to help you assess your indoor and outdoor spaces using the safety checklists that follow this page. Together, identify items that need your attention and what precautions you can take to improve the safety of the environment.

Indoor Safety Checklist

Date: ______________________________

Safety Checkers: ______________________________

____

Safety Conditions	Satisfactory or Not Applicable	Needs Attention
—CHECK DAILY—		
1. The schedule allows for supervision of children at all times.	☐	☐
2. The room is free of clutter.	☐	☐
3. Tables and chairs are in good repair.	☐	☐
4. Furniture is free of sharp edges and splinters.	☐	☐
5. Storage units are stable and secured; drawers and doors are closed.	☐	☐
6. Extension cords are not used near water or placed where someone might trip over them.	☐	☐
7. Steps, platforms, and lofts have padding underneath and protective railings.	☐	☐
8. The room contains no highly flammable furnishings or decorations.	☐	☐
9. Each area has enough space for children to work and play.	☐	☐
10. Hazardous chemicals and equipment (woodworking tools, specialized knives), cleaning materials, and other dangerous substances are stored only in locked cabinets and used by children only with adult supervision.	☐	☐
11. Floors are dry.	☐	☐
12. Rugs are in place and securely fastened.	☐	☐

Indoor Safety Checklist

(continued)

Safety Conditions	Satisfactory or Not Applicable	Needs Attention
—CHECK DAILY—		
13. Exit doors are clearly marked and free of clutter.	☐	☐
14. Exit signs are in working order.	☐	☐
15. Required adult-child ratios are maintained.	☐	☐
16. Staff interact with children rather than congregating with each other.	☐	☐
—CHECK MONTHLY—		
17. Blocks and other wooden items are smooth and splinter-free.	☐	☐
18. Moving parts (wheels, knobs) are securely fastened and working properly.	☐	☐
19. Scissors and knives used by children are sharp enough to cut with easily.	☐	☐
20. Hinges, screws, and bolts on furniture and equipment are securely fastened.	☐	☐
21. The smoke detector is working properly and the fire extinguishers are properly located and fully charged.	☐	☐
22. Electrical wires are not frayed.	☐	☐
23. Radiators and hot water pipes are covered or insulated.	☐	☐

Outdoor Safety Checklist

Safety Conditions	Satisfactory or Not Applicable	Needs Attention
—CHECK DAILY—		
1. Play equipment is free of splinters and rough surfaces.	☐	☐
2. There is sufficient cushioning under play equipment.*	☐	☐
3. No objects or obstructions are under or around equipment where children might fall.	☐	☐
4. Play equipment is free of frayed cables, worn ropes, and chains that could pinch.	☐	☐
5. Play areas are free of broken glass, debris, standing water, and loose gravel (on asphalt).	☐	☐
6. Safety zones are marked around swings, slides, and in areas where active sports and games are played (for example, waiting areas for next batter).	☐	☐
7. Riding paths for bikes and skates are clearly marked and separate from other activity areas.	☐	☐
8. Space for the day's activities and equipment is adequate and arranged to avoid collisions.	☐	☐
—CHECK MONTHLY—		
9. Screws, nuts, and bolts on climbing and other equipment are securely fastened and do not stick out.	☐	☐
10. Bicycles and other equipment are in good repair (screws tight, chains oiled, and not rusted).	☐	☐
11. Metal equipment is free of rust or chipped paint.	☐	☐
12. Equipment is securely affixed to the ground.	☐	☐
13. Fences enclose the area, are in good repair, and are free of splinters.	☐	☐

*U.S. Consumer Commission's *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*.

Review the items on each checklist you and the children have found in need of attention, and list them below. Then identify what steps you can take to improve the safety of your environment.

Items Needing Attention	Steps to Improve the Safety of the Environment	Date Completed

Discuss the steps for improvement with the children who helped you complete the checklist and with your trainer. Make these changes, and ask the children to check them off when they have been completed. Schedule times for daily and monthly safety checks throughout the year, and ask other children to help you.

Learning Activity II.

Preventing Accidents Through Supervision and Planning

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use effective supervision to keep school-age children safe; and
- plan a program that prevents children from becoming over-tired and frustrated.

Accidents can occur when children are tired or over-excited.

Although they are becoming more independent and responsible, school-age children need adult supervision. As they test their physical skills and try out ideas, they may act impulsively or take risks without thinking of the consequences. Some children are easily frustrated or get over-excited. They can be careless and cause accidents. In addition, when there is too much noise or when activities are too long or too demanding, the potential for accidents increases.

Although school-age children like to spend some time alone, they generally prefer to be with their friends. Social activity takes energy just as physical activity does; both can be very tiring. Tired children don't pay attention. They lose control over their bodies and feelings, and in a moment they can hurt themselves or others.

Plan a safe pace in your program.

When the program schedule is paced to include time for both active and quiet play, children are less likely to get over-tired. Here are some steps you can take to maintain a safe pace in your program.

- Ask children what they would like to do and when.
- Follow a flexible schedule that includes time for active sports and games and time to relax, take a break during an activity, and cool off at the end.
- Be ready to stop or change an activity if one or more of the children seems tired, angry, frustrated, or over-heated.
- Introduce a variety of cooperative games. School-age children tend to add their own competitiveness into the play.

Allow for individual differences.

Being aware of the characteristics of individual children also helps you prevent accidents. For example, some active and energetic children do not tire quickly; they remain even-tempered during physical activities. Others who are also active and energetic may tire quickly or become over-excited.

Try these suggestions.

Try the following strategies so children can participate at appropriate levels.

- Offer a range of activity choices to accommodate different skill levels. Guide children to appropriate activities based on their abilities.
- Provide choices appropriate for children of different ages. This is especially important during active sports in which younger children could be injured in collisions with older children.
- Follow a flexible schedule so you can support and guide children who have short attention spans or who tend to be impulsive or easily distracted. Offer alternatives so children can choose another activity or work and play on their own instead of with a group.
- Set limits for the number of children who may use a piece of equipment or interest area at a time. Discuss them at group meetings and make and post signs stating the limits.

Follow safe adult-child ratios.

The adult-child ratio followed by your program has a large impact on your ability to keep children safe. Standards set in the ASQ *Program Observation Questions for the Director* include set ratios for children under and over age 6. The standard for children under age 6 is 1 staff person for 8 children, and the standard for children age 6 and older is 1 staff person for 10 to 15 children. Group sizes may vary according to the activity, but generally do not exceed 20. These ratios allow staff to supervise children and offer a variety of interesting activities. If you don't know the ratios followed by your program, ask your director or trainer.

Monitor children's arrival and departures.

School-age programs also need security procedures covering entrances to the building and children's arrivals and departures. The number of open entrances to the building should be limited to the absolute minimum to prevent access to adults or children who are not enrolled. Ideally, visitors to the building should sign in and out at a reception desk and wear name badges.

In addition, children's arrivals and departures must be monitored. Parents should sign their children in and out and children should sign out and/or let a staff member know when leaving one area to go to another. If children are allowed to leave the program alone—either to go home or to go to an activity such as scouts or gymnastics—written permission from the parents should be on file. Before leaving, these children should tell a staff member, then sign out, indicating the time left and where they are going.

Work with colleagues to supervise all indoor and outdoor areas.

You and your colleagues must plan and work together to make sure all indoor and outdoor areas are supervised. For example, if you are working with a group of children in the woodworking area, arrange to have colleagues keep an eye on other indoor and outdoor areas in use. Some programs find it helpful to have as a rotating staff assignment, an "air traffic controller," who does not monitor a specific area or activity, but instead keeps track of the big picture. The air traffic controller monitors children's arrivals and departures, steps in to help other staff when necessary (as in the vignette in the Overview), and focuses on where children are as they move from one area to another and outdoors.

Supervision of children may lessen as they get older.

The amount of supervision children require lessens as they get older and more responsible. Your program may have policies for supervision based on children's ages. For example:

- children under age 7 must always be visible to staff;
- children ages 8 to 10 can sign out when going to another room or the outdoor area as long as a staff member is on duty in the area; and
- children 10 to 12 can sign out and go to an area that is monitored by staff every 30 minutes.

The amount of supervision also varies according to the activity taking place. If children are conducting an experiment using potentially hazardous chemicals, they need your close and constant attention. Children painting a mural or holding a meeting of the Chess Club are less likely to have accidents. You can keep an eye on them from a distance and periodically stop by to see if they need assistance.

Try these strategies for effective supervision.

Some other strategies for providing effective supervision follow.

- Stand near equipment when it is in use and pay attention to the children.
- Provide constant, close supervision over active sports and games and for activities using hazardous materials.
- Participate with the children, not in conversations with other staff members.
- If children are spread out in a large area, be sure one staff member can move from place to place to view the entire area and monitor what everyone is doing.

Even safe materials can become dangerous if used the wrong way.

You must be very alert to keep children safe and protected from accidents. Your well-trained eyes can protect a child from water spilled on the floor, sharp edges, loose parts, wood splinters, and broken toys. Anything, including the program's "safe" materials and equipment, can become dangerous if used the wrong way. For example, so-called safe items can be harmful if a child:

- uses a table as a step-ladder;
- tilts back in a chair;
- pushes the swing when no one is in it; or
- wraps a jump rope around her arms and neck.

When you see these or other unsafe practices, step in as quickly as possible. Explain to children why their behaviors are unsafe, and remind them of safe ways to use materials and equipment.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you try to identify hazards in your environment, as you observe a child for five minutes. Take notes on all the things the child does (index cards are handy for this). Then use your observation notes to answer the questions that follow. Begin by reviewing the example on the next page.

Preventing Accidents

(Example)

Child: *Benjamin* **Age:** *11 years* **Date:** *April 12*

Setting: *Science Area*

What is the child doing?

Benjamin is setting up a new aquarium in science area. He gets out old pump from closet and sets it on floor under table. Next, he carries water back and forth from sink. With each trip some water drips on floor. An electrical cord lying on floor. He doesn't notice dripping water and some of the water starts trickling down towards the cord. Simon calls him from across the room. Benjamin goes to see what Simon wants. He leaves behind the half-filled aquarium, wet floor, and wet electrical cord.

What dangers did you observe in the environment?

The water on the floor could cause Benjamin and other children to slip and fall. The wet electrical cord is hazardous. It would be dangerous for Benjamin or any one else to plug it in because it is wet.

What can you do to prevent unnecessary accidents?

Because this is an immediate hazard, I stopped writing my observations and immediately went to remove the electrical cord before it was covered with water. I then can help Benjamin move the table closer to the sink so less water will spill. Then I can remind him to cover the area under the aquarium with towels before he begins to fill it. Also, I can help him learn it is important to keep electrical cords away from water. Finally, I can remind him he needs to finish the job he started before going to play with Simon. It is unsafe to leave the aquarium half-filled and the floor and cord dripping wet.

Preventing Accidents

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Setting: ____

What is the child doing?

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What dangers did you observe in the environment?

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What can you do to prevent unnecessary accidents?

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Discuss your answers with a colleague.

Learning Activity III.
Knowing and Following Emergency Procedures

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- prepare for accidents and other emergencies; and
- follow the program's established procedures for dealing with emergencies.

Everyone needs to prepare for emergencies.

Even the most safety-conscious and well-prepared staff member will face emergencies from time to time. How would you respond if a child fell off a bicycle, if the building lost power during a rainstorm, or if you smelled smoke?

Emergencies often happen at the worst possible moments, so the time to get ready for them is before they happen. Part of keeping children safe is knowing and following your program's emergency policies and procedures. The better you know these procedures, the more quickly and effectively you can act when an emergency occurs. Your program probably has specific forms for permission, injury reports, and emergency contacts. You may be asked to fill out these forms.

Participating in emergency drills helps everyone to be ready. Every program should have emergency procedures posted so all adults can cooperate to get the children to safety. It is helpful to know in advance who will be responsible for giving first aid, who will oversee the evacuation of the building if necessary, and how to act quickly and get help.

Responding to Children's Emergencies

When a child has an accident you must quickly assess how serious the injury is and respond correctly. Most injuries can be handled with soothing words and perhaps a bandage. Others require first aid at the program and perhaps a trip to the hospital.

If you must accompany a child in the ambulance, be sure to bring with you the child's signed medical history and emergency authorization forms.

Call for emergency assistance immediately under the following conditions:[2]

- bleeding that does not stop when you apply direct pressure to the wound;
- unconsciousness;
- anything beyond a local reaction to an insect sting;
- breathing difficulties, difficulty catching breath or turning blue;
- convulsions;
- severe, persistent abdominal pain that lasts more than two hours; or
- bloody or tarry (black) bowel movement in a child who is not taking iron (this indicates bleeding).

Be sure to call the child's parents as soon as you complete the emergency call.

Call the dentist immediately if a child knocks a permanent tooth loose. If the tooth has been knocked out, find it, and wrap it in a clean cloth. Permanent teeth can be successfully reimplanted if the child is treated promptly.

First-Aid Procedures

First-aid is the immediate care you provide to a child who is injured or ill. It is a way to manage the patient's situation until further medical care can take place. CPR is used in situations such as drownings, electric shock, and smoke inhalation to clear the patient's throat and help him or her to breathe.

Maintain a well-stocked first-aid kit.

The school-age program should maintain a well-stocked first-aid kit to be used in an emergency. It is a good idea to have a kit to take on fieldtrips, as well as one to keep at the program. The kit should be restocked after each use and checked every month to make sure all items are still in place. A basic first-aid kit contains the following items:[3]

- index cards and pens
- thermometer
- flashlight
- coins to make emergency calls (at least $1.00)

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[2] Reprinted with permission from *Sick Child Care Book for Parents and Child Care Providers*, BANANAS Child Care Information and Referral (Oakland, CA: BANANAS, 1980), pp. 6-7.

[3] Adapted from Susan Aronson, MD, FAAP, Herberta Smith, RN, PNP, and Jo-Ann Martin, MSN, RN, *Model Child Care Health Policies* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1993), Appendix R.

- poison control center phone number
- first-aid guide (Red Cross or equivalent)
- blunt tip scissors
- tweezers
- box of 2" X 2" sterile gauze pads
- box of 4" X 4" sterile gauze pads
- roll of flexible 2" roller gauze
- roll of flexible 4" roller gauze
- bandage tape
- assorted small bandages (extras of the 1" size because these are used most often)
- a triangular muslin bandage
- antibacterial soap
- a large, clean container (1- to 2-quart) for use in flushing eyes
- eye irrigation saline solution
- eye dressing
- cold pack
- plastic bags for ice packs
- disposable, nonporous gloves
- safety pins
- syrup of Ipecac (see discussion below)
- additional supplies for a child who has special health needs (e.g., a bee sting kit or antihistamine for a child with severe allergy, honey or sugar for a child with diabetes, or an inhalator for a child with asthma)

It is also a good idea to keep on hand extra blankets, pillows, and ice packs.

Syrup of Ipecac should be included in your first-aid kit; however, do not administer it until you have checked with the child's pediatrician, or a physician at the poison control center in your community. After administering syrup of Ipecac, the child needs to go to a hospital for medical evaluation.

When giving first aid, remember these important rules.

- **Do no harm.** (Harm might occur if you fail to treat the injury or if you make the injury worse.)
- **Do not move a hurt child except to save a life.** (Moving the child might cause further injury.)

Follow these steps when giving first aid.

If you must administer first aid, it is crucial to remain calm so you can think clearly and act appropriately. It is also important to reassure the child. Ask other children to move away from the victim so you can carry out the necessary first aid in a clear area. Have someone else call 911 for assistance while you attend to the injured child. If more than one person is hurt, begin by administering first aid to the person who seems to be in the greatest danger.

- Find out what happened.

  What caused the injury?
  How?
  Who is hurt?
  Is there still danger?

- Check for life-threatening problems.

  Is the child conscious?

  If not, is the child breathing (chest moving and air coming out of nose or mouth)?

  If the child is not breathing, lift only the child's jaw and give four quick breaths of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Is there a pulse in the neck? If not start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

  If the child is conscious, ask questions such as, "what's your name?" to help determine the child's condition. Keep checking breathing and pulse.

  Wash any wounds to reduce chances of infection.

- Call an ambulance if you have any doubt about the situation. Then call the child's parents.
- Check for injuries, starting at the head and working down. When medical personnel arrive, they will ask you for this information.
- Regroup. Check the condition of any other injured children. Calmly explain to everyone present that you are taking care of the injured child.
- Complete an accident report form. Follow local regulation procedures for reporting the accident and give copies of the form to the parents.

Follow these CPR steps.

CPR techniques include the following:

- Clear the throat with a finger sweep and wipe out any fluid, vomitus, mucus, or foreign body.
- Place the victim on his or her back.
- Straighten neck (unless neck injury is suspected) and lift the victim's jaw.
- Give slow, steady breaths into the mouth with nostrils pinched closed.
- Breathe at 15 puffs per minute. Use only enough air to move the child's chest up and down.

If there is no pulse or heartbeat, use the following technique:

- Place the victim on an firm surface.
- Depress 1/3 of the breastbone with the heel of your hand at 80 compressions per minute. There should be 5 compressions to one respiration.

Use these techniques in response to choking.

Place the child on his or her back. Kneel down and place the heel of your hand on the child's abdomen in the midline between the navel and the rib cage. Apply a series of 6 to 10 rapid inward and upward abdominal thrusts, until the foreign object is expelled. Use two hands to apply the thrusts while the child is sitting, standing or lying down.

If these emergency procedures are not successful, call an ambulance as quickly as possible.

Follow these procedures when responding to burns.

If burns are caused by heat, respond as follows:

- Immerse the burned area in cool water or apply cool (50° to 60° F) compresses to burns on a child's trunk or face to relieve the pain.
- Do not break blisters.
- Use aluminum foil as an emergency covering because it will not stick to the burn.
- Call an ambulance for burns of any size on a child's face, hands, feet, or genitalia.

For extensive burns, call an ambulance; then respond as follows:

- Keep the patient flat and warm.
- Remove clothing from the burn area if it comes off easily; if not, leave it alone.
- Apply cool, wet compresses to the injured area (not more the 25 percent of the body at one time).
- Do not use ointments, greases, or powders.

For electrical burns, respond as follows:

- Do not use your bare hands.
- Disconnect the power source if possible or pull the child away from the source using wood or cloth (these will not conduct electricity).
- Apply CPR if necessary.
- Call an ambulance.

Be prepared to respond to poison emergencies.

A poison emergency occurs when a toxic substance touches someone in a harmful way. This can happen when someone swallows a toxic substance, gets chemicals in the eyes, or touches or breathes toxic fumes. The following common substances might be poisonous: cleaners and laundry products; hair care products; prescription and over-the-counter drugs; hobby and craft supplies; plant food and lawn care chemicals; cigarettes; liquor; paint and paint removal products; and workroom supplies.

Whenever you suspect or know that a child has been poisoned, you must immediately call the poison control center or a medical clinic. Tell whoever answers the phone what product or chemical the child was exposed to (have the container with you when you make the call). Tell the person how much the child took or was exposed to and how long ago the accident took place.

Syrup of Ipecac is a substance that induces vomiting. Using it is not always advisable. Some poisons, such as drain cleaner or lye, can do serious damage to the esophagus if vomited. Do **not** use Ipecac unless told to do so by the poison control center serving your community.

Stay calm and follow proper procedures.

Your calm and quick response to an accident is important. Proper procedures include: notifying your supervisor that an accident has occurred; informing the child's parents (immediately for serious injuries or at the end of the day for minor ones); documenting, on the appropriate form, what happened.

Handling Weather-Related Emergencies

Although you work hard to make your environment safe, emergencies may be caused by events outside your control. Floods, landslides, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other weather-related emergencies may happen with little or no warning. If you know what to do, you can act swiftly. Weather-related emergencies may happen more often in some geographic locations than in others. It is important to learn about those likely to happen in your area and review your program's plans for responding to these events.

For additional information about recommended precautions and actions, you can contact local authorities or the National Weather Service. Share this information with the children. Role-play how everyone should respond in a real emergency.

The National Weather Service recommends the actions described below to keep safe in case of lightning storms, tornadoes, and earthquakes.

Take these precautions while outdoors during a lightning storm.

The best precaution is to avoid being outdoors in a lightning storm. Get weather information before traveling, and carry a small transistor radio to get updates if the weather turns stormy. Move to shelter as quickly as possible. If you are caught in a lightning storm, take the following actions:

- Stay out of metal or wood sheds.
- Seek shelter in a vehicle or in a low area under **small** trees.
- Do not stand on a hilltop.
- Avoid being the tallest object in the area.
- Stay away from isolated trees and from items made of metal—pipes, rails, fences, and wire clotheslines.
- Do not touch or use metal sporting equipment (golf clubs or shoes, tennis rackets, bikes).
- If you are in a group, spread out and keep several yards apart.
- Stay away from water.
- If your hair stands on end, you are in **immediate danger**—drop to your knees and curl your head forward. Make your body as small as possible.
- When someone is struck, he or she carries no electrical charge and may be handled safely. Even if the person is feeling fine, immediate medical attention is recommended. Keep the person warm and elevate his/her legs.

During a tornado, take these actions.

In the event of a tornado, respond as follows:

If you are in a building:

- Move to a basement or storm shelter.
- Stay away from windows.
- If the building has no basement, go to a small room, closet, or bathroom in the center of the building.
- In a high-rise building, move to the center of the building, preferably to a stairwell. Do not open windows.

If you are in open country:

- Lie face down in a low area.
- Cover your head.

If you are in a vehicle:

- Stop the vehicle.
- Get out and lie down in a low area.
- Cover your head.
- **Do not try to outrun a tornado in a car.**

Take these precautions during an earthquake.

Earthquakes occur without warning. If you are in a location where earthquakes are likely, practice with the children what steps to take. If inside during an earthquake, stay there and get away from the windows. Use a pillow, magazine, or book to cover your head and the back of your neck. It helps to get under a table or to stay inside a strong doorway.

If you are outside during an earthquake, stay there. Stay away from high buildings, walls, power poles, and similar objects.

After the earthquake, wait for additional shocks. Do not light matches or turn on any lights because you could cause a fire. Keep your head and face protected as you check on the children. Administer first aid if needed. Turn on a radio and listen for emergency instructions.

Using a Fire Extinguisher

Knowing when and when not to use a fire extinguisher is an important part of being prepared for an emergency. Do not try to fight fires that spread beyond the spot where they started. For example, you will probably be able to put out a grease fire in a frying pan, but if it gets out of control, you and the children should get out of the building immediately. Also, if the fire could block your exit, evacuate the building immediately. Use an extinguisher only if the following is true:

- All the children are safely out of the building and in the care of a responsible person.
- You can get out fast if your efforts aren't working.
- You are nearby when the fire starts, or you discover the fire soon after it has started.
- The fire is small and confined to a space such as a trash can, cushion, or small appliance.
- You can fight the fire with your back to an exit.

- The extinguisher is in working order, and you can:

    stand back about 8 feet;

    aim at the base of the fire, not the flames or smoke; and

    squeeze or press the lever while sweeping from the sides to the middle.

If you have the slightest doubt about whether to fight the fire or get out, **get out of the building and call the fire department.** Your safety is more important than the property you might save.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you review your program's established procedures for evacuating children and staff in case of fire or other emergencies. You also review your program's accident procedures. Then answer the questions on emergency procedures that follow.

Emergency and Accident Procedures

What is your emergency evacuation plan? What would you do if the planned route was blocked? What phone number would you use to call for assistance?

What would you do if a child cut his or her leg during outdoor play?

What would you do if a fire started during a cooking activity?

Who informs parents if their child has had a minor accident? When are the parents informed?

Who calls for emergency medical assistance if a child has a serious accident? What is the procedure for contacting the child's parents?

What medical facility would you go to in an emergency? How would you get there?

What emergencies (weather related or otherwise) might affect your program? What are the procedures for dealing with these emergencies?

When you are away from the program site, what are your emergency plans to notify parents and your supervisor of an accident or injury?

Discuss your answers with your trainer. If you have questions about what to do in an emergency, review your program's emergency procedures and discuss them with your supervisor.

Learning Activity IV.

Ensuring Children's Safety Away From the Program

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- teach children how to walk and cross streets safely; and
- take safe field trips and excursions with children.

School-age children are expanding their understanding of the world. Field trips and excursions in the neighborhood extend children's learning. However, taking children away from the program, crossing streets, or transporting them in vehicles to new and unfamiliar locations also involves an element of risk. You can minimize the risks by teaching children to walk and cross streets safely and planning safe field trips and excursions.

Walking Safely Near Traffic

There are many good reasons to walk in the neighborhood. For example, walking to a neighborhood park or going to a community facility (such as a bowling alley or a tennis court) could offer the children new and challenging experiences. You might plan walks to explore new concepts or skills: a listening walk, a walk to collect seeds in the fall, or a visit to local stores to purchase something the group needs. But children need to learn to walk safely near traffic.

Statistics indicate over 90 percent of all pedestrian-related accidents are the fault of the pedestrian, not the motorist. Police departments offer a simple slogan to children and adults when going into traffic: *Cross Wise*. Here are the guidelines for ensuring pedestrian safety offered by one police department.[4]

1. At crosswalks where there are signals, obey the **Walk/Don't Walk** signals. Where there are no signals, wait for a new green light in the direction you are walking before entering the intersection.
2. Always cross at the corner and stay within the crosswalk.

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[4] Montgomery County Department of Police, Bethesda Traffic Squad, Pedestrian Safety Program, "Cross Wise" (funded by the Maryland Department of Transportation).

3. Do not walk out from between parked cars.
4. Always walk on the sidewalk. When there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic.
5. Look in both directions for traffic before crossing, even if crossing on a **Walk** signal.
6. Wear or carry a reflective material when walking at night or at dusk.
7. Pay attention at all times.

Before taking a walk with children, review and discuss these safety guidelines. Think ahead about children who tend to act before thinking or who are easily distracted. Be sure one adult is assigned to be with these children at all times.

Planning Safe Field Trips and Excursions

School-age children often get excited about taking special trips away from the program. Their excitement is in part due to the fact the situation is unfamiliar. This may cause some children to be nervous and afraid. You too may be nervous about supervising the children in an unfamiliar location. You may be anxious about transporting children to and from a place where you have never been. By carefully planning ahead for these trips, you can reduce children's anxiety (and your own) and minimize the risks. Before taking a trip, it is important to establish procedures. The questions listed below can guide your planning.

- How will children be supervised?
- What should children do if they are accidentally separated from the group?
- What should children do if a stranger approaches them?
- What guidelines do children need for using public transportation and restrooms?
- How will children be kept safe while riding in program vehicles?
- What are the general guidelines for children's behavior?

Complete these steps before the trip.

Prior to each trip, take the following steps to ensure the children's safety. (Staff can divide up these tasks and then report back to each other.)

- Inform parents well in advance of the trip, and have them sign permission slips several days before the trip.
- If possible, travel to the site from the program using the same route you will follow on the trip. Look for potential problems

such as road repairs or detours, traffic congestion, lane restrictions, one-way streets, or parking problems. Adjust the trip schedule accordingly.

- While at the site, locate the telephones, restrooms, food stands (or picnic tables), shelters for poor weather, and where to get emergency assistance. If you plan to separate into smaller groups, identify a convenient place to meet at the end of the visit. (On the trip, you may want to use "walkie-talkies" to communicate with each other.)
- Prepare a trip folder including the following information:

  emergency telephone numbers (the program, police)

  signed parent emergency forms (be sure information is correct and current)

  signed permission slips
- Check the first-aid kit and replace missing or outdated items.
- Estimate how many children will go on the trip, and make sure the vehicle to be used has enough seats and seat belts.
- Plan for the unexpected. Bring a list of five to ten familiar games and activities that require no equipment or supplies in case there are delays or problems. Back-up activities such as guessing games, storytelling, and pantomimes will keep children calm and occupied in an emergency.
- Recruit volunteers—parents, senior citizens, college or high school students—to help supervise the children if your group is very big or if you are to visit a large or congested site. Be sure volunteers are always supervised by a staff member.
- Plan how members of the group can be identified (for example, program T-shirts or name tags). To protect children, name tags should include their first names only. Write the program's telephone number on the back.

Discuss safety procedures with children on the day of the trip.

On the day of the trip review the safety rules and emergency precautions with the children. Listed below are some things to discuss calmly and clearly, and without alarming the children:

- Where children should go if they accidentally become separated from the group. An emergency or first aid area, the public telephone, or the main office of the building are good places to meet.
- Why it is important to remain on trails and with the group in wooded areas, and what children should do if they get lost:

  Stay in one place and let the group find you. As soon as we notice someone is missing, we will begin a search.

Use the universal distress call—a signal such as a shout or a whistle repeated three times at frequent intervals—to let the group know where you are.

Try to get as comfortable as possible. If necessary, find shelter for the night against a rock or under cover of trees or bushes. Use everything in your pack to stay warm and dry. If you can start a fire, collect as much wood as you will need before it gets too dark.

Try not to worry! Lots of people will be looking for you.

- Where and when to go for snack, lunch, at the end of the visit.
- Why it's important for security reasons to stay with a buddy at all times.
- How to use public bathrooms safely.
- Why it's important not to go into secluded areas (for example, behind buildings or into deserted areas of museums).
- How to be safe while riding to and from the site:

  Use seat belts.

  Keep arms and heads inside the windows.

  Stay seated while the vehicle is moving.

  Refrain from shoving, throwing things, or behaving in ways which could disturb and distract the driver.
- What children should do if a stranger approaches them: **try to get away**.
- Other rules related to strangers:

  Don't go near a stranger's car to give help or directions.

  Don't accept rides or gifts from strangers.

  Don't go into secluded areas with a stranger.

  Don't tell a stranger your name, address, or any other personal information.

  Do find a responsible adult and tell him or her a stranger approached you.

Follow your plans while on the field trip.

On the day of the trip, follow through with your plans. Use a checklist of what to do at each stage of the trip. Your checklist can include the following items and others relevant to your program.

- Before you leave the program:

  Gather all information and materials for the trip, including a list of who is going (check the list to be sure everyone is with you).

  Make sure vehicles do not have too many passengers.

  Make sure everyone is wearing seat belts if they are available.

  Remove any sharp or heavy objects from inside the vehicle—these become dangerous in a sudden stop.

  Review the rules for vehicle safety.

- On your way to and from the site:

  Be sure children observe safety rules.

  Ask the driver to pull off the road and stop if children are out of control; if you are the driver, stop before disciplining children.

  Never leave children without adult supervision.

- While you are at the site:

  Check prearranged procedures on arrival.

  Notify children and staff of changes in plans before small groups go in different directions.

- When you leave the site:

  Account for everyone. Count the children at least twice.

  Give children the same reminders (vehicle safety) you used before leaving the program.

Ensuring children's safety is especially challenging when you are away from the program. Following the suggestions listed in this learning activity will help you meet the challenge.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you review your program's policies and procedures for ensuring children's safety on field trips and when walking in your neighborhood. After recording them on the form that follows, you can compare them to the suggestions above and list safety precautions you want to add.

Protecting Children Away from the Program

What are your program's rules and procedures for taking children away from the program?

What does your program require you to do before a field trip?

What are the rules and procedures for keeping children safe on field trips?

What activities could you lead to keep children calm and safe during an emergency or unexpected delay?

How can you improve the procedures and the planning process to more effectively ensure children's safety away from the program?

Discuss your answers with your trainer and your colleagues. Implement the ideas you feel are needed to ensure children's safety away from the program.

Learning Activity V.

Helping Children Keep Themselves Safe

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- develop safety rules with children; and
- reinforce the rules so children learn them.

School-age children can understand how and why accidents happen and what they can do to prevent them. They can work with staff to complete safety checklists such as the one included in Learning Activity I and identify hazards or unsafe materials in the interest areas and outdoors. When children know what to look for, they can help prevent accidents and keep themselves safe.

Children learn about safety from watching adults.

The first step in teaching children safety is to show them, by your actions, how you prevent accidents. Children need to see you walking, not running, indoors; sitting, not standing, on chairs; and wearing goggles at the woodworking bench.

Children can help set program rules.

One of the best ways to teach children how to keep themselves safe is to include them in developing safety rules. Children can identify potential problems and hazards and help make a list of important rules. They can encourage others to learn and observe the rules. Even when they know the rules, however, they need constant supervision and frequent, firm reminders about the importance of safety.

Discuss potential dangers.

To develop safety rules with school-age children, you might start a discussion by saying: "Tell me about . . . " "What could happen if . . . ?" "What might happen if . . . ?" You can discuss the dangers of activities such as the following:

- pushing and shoving;
- crawling, climbing, or walking on furniture;
- carrying a pan full of hot liquid;
- sitting on furniture not intended for that purpose (for example, a pool table);
- pushing an unoccupied swing, jumping from moving swings, or climbing on swing frames;
- using equipment designed for younger, smaller children, and therefore not strong enough to hold school-age children;

- using slides for standing, running up and down, or coming down backwards;
- throwing sand or gravel;
- climbing trees or fences;
- winding jump ropes around arms, legs, or necks;
- running while carrying sticks, shovels, or sharp objects; and
- throwing bats, hockey sticks, and other sports equipment.

Set guidelines before a new activity.

A good time to involve children in developing appropriate safety and accident prevention guidelines is **before** they participate in a new activity. For example:

- Show children how to use equipment properly (for example, how to hold a saw and where to place one's hands when sawing a board). Children who already know how can show others how to use the equipment.
- Emphasize the need to wear protective gear (such as helmets, pads, goggles, eyeglass guards) for active sports and games and potentially hazardous activities. Show children how to wear protective gear properly (for example, bicycle helmets need to be the right size, positioned properly on the head, and they must be buckled).
- Set up safety zones for children waiting a turn in ball games.
- Plan cleanup routines so all equipment is safely put away and areas are free of clutter at the end of an activity.

Review the rules for a new sport or game.

When introducing children to a new sport or game, review the rules and explain how following them will prevent accidents and injuries. Follow these steps when introducing a sport or game:

- Describe the general goals of the game.
- Demonstrate new skills to be used. Have children practice the new skills.
- Explain the steps or rules clearly. If a game is complicated, break the directions into parts and let children learn one part of the game at a time. Minimize the potential for "horseplay" by keeping your explanations brief and to the point.
- Ask children to explain the rules to you, to make sure they understood your explanation.
- Answer children's questions to be sure everyone understands.
- Monitor the game once it has started to be sure everyone knows how to play.

Children need reminders of safety rules.

Even after rules are developed and communicated, children will still need occasional reminders. Try these suggestions to help children remember to follow the rules:

- Reinforce rules simply and often. "Amber, this is the bicycle riding area. You may kick your ball on the grass."
- Step in when necessary to help a child follow the rules. "J. T. and Gina, I reminded you several times you are not allowed to chase each other up and down the bleachers. One of you could fall and be hurt. If you need to burn off some energy, you may run laps around the gym."
- Remove a child from an activity if he or she continues to break a safety rule; explain the reason for your action. "Corey, the cue is only to be used for playing pool. I reminded you earlier it is dangerous to use it as a sword. Because you are still using it that way, you must put it away and leave the pool table. I'll help you find something else to do."

Safety slogans and posters can offer reminders.

Encourage children to write safety slogans and make posters to help everyone remember the program's rules. Posters might offer the following reminders:

- This area is reserved for bike riding (or jump roping).
- Wear goggles at the woodworking bench.
- Eating and running don't mix!
- Wear a helmet and protective gear when skating or bike riding.
- Stay clear of the batter's box.

Ask community representatives to teach children about safety.

Community resources are available to help children learn about safety. You might, for example, ask a community organizer or someone from the police department to come and talk about the issue of gun control and violence. They can help children learn ways to keep themselves safe in threatening situations. If an incident occurred near the program and children were witnesses or know the people involved, a counselor might be brought in to help everyone deal with their concerns and fears.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you work with the children in your program to develop safety limits for an activity in an indoor or outdoor area. Review the example, then answer the questions that follow.

Developing Safety Rules With Children

(Example)

Area: *Asphalt Play Area* **Age(s):** *8-10 years* **Date:** *October 10*

Activity: *Relay Races*

What do you think are the safety hazards in this activity and area?

There could be loose gravel or trash on the playing surface that might make children fall.

There are several barriers near the area children could run into—a utility box, a large tree, and the brick wall of the building.

Children could run into each other if the relay teams run too close together.

Children also might fall if the bottoms of their shoes are too slippery for the asphalt surface or if their shoelaces are untied.

How did the children answer your "tell me about . . . " questions?

Joe said, "It takes a lot of energy."

Dennis said, "I like to run so fast nothing can stop me."

Kim said, "Sometimes it's hard to find the next person on your team when it's time to hand over the bean bag."

Julie said, "When you run really fast, sometimes you think you're going to fall."

How did the children answer your "what might happen if . . . " and "what could happen when . . . " questions?

Kim said, "You could knock over other people if you're not careful."

Dennis said, "If I run too close to the wall, I might crash into it before I stop."

Julie said, "You could fall if you don't have your shoes on tight, especially if you trip on something."

What safety limits did you and the children develop for this activity and area?

Before you play, always check the playing area for loose gravel, glass, and trash.

Use orange cones to separate the relay teams and to mark a start line where the next player in line can stand.

Set up turning lanes so children won't collide with each other or run into the barriers.

Wear shoes that are good for running, and tie the shoelaces.

Developing Safety Rules With Children

Area: ____________________ **Age(s):** ____________________ **Date:** ____________________

Activity: ____

What do you think are the safety hazards in this activity and area?

How did the children answer your "tell me about . . . " question?

How did the children answer your "what might happen if . . . " and "what could happen when . . . " questions?

What safety limits did you and the children develop for this activity and area?

Discuss your responses with your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for keeping children safe. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Keeping Children Safe

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

1. **What did Mr. Sullivan do to create a safe outdoor environment?**
   a. He completed the program's outdoor safety checklist.
   b. He removed the branches that fell during the storm.
   c. He checked the climber for splinters.
   d. He raked the wood chips back under the climber.
   e. He swept the water off the asphalt.
   f. He marked safety areas.
2. **What next steps does Mr. Sullivan need to take to make sure the outdoor environment is safe?**
   a. He needs to ask for volunteers to help pick up the twigs.
   b. He needs to report the rough surface under the timber on the climber and make sure it is sanded.

Planning for and Responding to Accidents and Emergencies

1. **What did Mr. Lopez do to keep all the children safe?**
   a. He immediately stopped the game so he could check on Tony and Gillian.
   b. He asked Ms. Kendrick to take over for him while he got the ice for injured children.
2. **What did Mr. Lopez do after taking care of the children's injuries?**
   a. He completed an accident report.
   b. He put a note in each child's cubby to let parents know what happened and to ask them to review and sign the accident report.

Helping Children Develop Habits That Will Reduce and Prevent Accidents and Injuries

1. **Why did Ms. Nelson think it was important for the girls to make safety rules for their club?**
    a. She knew the playground needed to be checked daily for loose gravel, glass, and trash.
    b. She realized the girls were so excited about their new club they hadn't stopped to think about safety before they began to play.
    c. She knew the girls were capable of thinking of ways to keep themselves safe.
2. **How did the children learn to keep themselves safe?**
    a. They learned it is important to think about safety and hazards in the environment before beginning to play.
    b. They wrote down some safety rules for their club.

GLOSSARY

Emergency	Unplanned or unexpected situation in which children or adults are harmed or may be harmed.
Hazard	A source of danger; a condition that may cause an accident or emergency.
Precaution	Steps taken to prevent accidents or to ensure safety.
Safety	Freedom from danger.

Module 2:
HEALTHY

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OVERVIEW

HELPING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN STAY HEALTHY INVOLVES:

- maintaining indoor and outdoor environments that promote wellness and reduce the spread of disease;
- encouraging children to develop habits that promote good hygiene and nutrition; and
- recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Healthy people feel good about themselves.

Good health is a state of well-being—physical, mental, and social—not simply the absence of disease. People who are healthy feel good about themselves. They:

- are well-rested, energetic, and strong;
- eat the right foods;
- avoid (or use moderately) alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine;
- exercise regularly; and
- get along well with others;

Each of us has certain health and nutrition routines that are part of our daily lives. Some of these routines may be good for us, and some may not. Because most of us want to become and remain healthy, we try to increase the number of good routines, such as snacking on fruits and vegetables, and decrease the number of bad ones, such as smoking or failing to get enough exercise.

School-age children can learn good health and nutrition routines.

Most school-age children have the cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical skills they need to learn good health and nutrition routines. They can understand the consequences of eating foods high in fat or salt and failing to brush and floss their teeth, and may be motivated to adopt healthy eating and dental habits. Instead of keeping their feelings bottled up, children can learn how to express their emotions and manage their stress or anxiety. Children's physical skills are growing, too. Participating in a wide variety of fitness activities contributes to their overall health and well-being. (Promoting physical development is discussed in detail in Module 4, Physical.) The healthy habits children develop during these years usually continue throughout their lives.

School-age staff can model healthy practices.

One way children learn about good health and nutrition is by following the lead of adults. When you wash your hands and encourage children to wash theirs, you model an effective way to prevent diseases from spreading. When you eat breakfast family-style with the children, you model a healthy nutrition practice—starting the day with a balanced meal. In addition, you teach about good health and nutrition in the course of daily life at the program. You involve children in planning and serving nutritious snacks, encourage them to help keep the environment clean, and show them relaxation techniques to use after a stressful day.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in helping children stay healthy.

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Promote Wellness and Reduce the Spread of Disease

Check the facility daily for adequate ventilation and lighting, comfortable room temperature, and good sanitation.

Open windows daily to let in fresh air.

Provide tissues, paper towels, and soap in places children can reach; ask children to help keep these items stocked.

Complete daily health checks and be alert to symptoms of illness.

Recognize symptoms of common childhood illnesses (such as measles, mumps, and chicken pox), syndromes (such as obesity, anorexia, and bulimia), and progressive diseases (such as alcohol or drug abuse). Stay in regular contact with parents.

Wash their hands and encourage children to wash theirs using techniques recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Maintain a positive, relaxed, and pleasant program atmosphere to reduce tension and stress.

Clean and disinfect surfaces before using for food preparation.

Encouraging Children to Develop Habits That Promote Good Hygiene and Nutrition

Help children learn to recognize, reduce, and handle stress. "Rochelle, you seem a little frustrated. How about taking a break from your computer game?"

Model healthy habits, such as handwashing, using tissues, eating nutritious foods, and sanitizing materials and surfaces. "Uh-oh, here comes a big sneeze! I'd better go get a tissue."

Provide resources on health and hygiene, such as magazines, books, pamphlets, clubs, and visiting health professionals. "I'm glad you signed up for the Fitness Club. A nutritionist is coming to our first meeting to talk about healthy snacks."

Involve children in planning and preparing nutritious meals and snacks for the program. "You collected some interesting recipes when you surveyed the other children."

Sit with children, "family-style," during snack and meal times to encourage conversation and to model healthy habits. "I've never had tofu before, but I'm going to try some. People in Asia eat it all the time. Joel, would you like to try some?"

Help children recognize when their bodies need a change—rest, some food or water, or movement. "Kegan, you've been working on your papier maché dinosaur all afternoon. How about coming down to the gym for a while? We're going to stretch our bodies and play a few games."

Offer self-service snack so children can determine when, what, and how much to eat. "The snack area will be open until 4 p.m. You can help yourself when you're hungry."

Plan a flexible daily schedule that includes time for outdoor activities and responds to children's physical needs.

Keep a supply of sanitary pads and tampons in the girls' bathroom and make sure girls know where they are in case they are too embarrassed to ask for them.

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Learn the definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or maltreatment, and neglect.

Recognize the physical and behavioral signs that a child might be a victim of abuse or neglect.

Follow required procedures to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Maintain confidentiality after filing a report of suspected child maltreatment.

Protect children by reporting suspected abuse or neglect without waiting for proof.

Support families and help them get the services they need.

Helping Children Stay Healthy

In the following situations, school-age staff are helping children stay healthy. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Promote Wellness and Reduce the Spread of Disease

Ms. Nunes enters the room and opens several windows. It is a cool day, so she raises them only a few inches. She checks the area around the sink and notices the soap dispenser is full but the towel supply is low. She makes a note to ask one of the children to put out some more paper towels. As the children arrive, she greets each one warmly, checking to see if anyone has signs of the flu that was running through the program. "You have a runny nose today, David. Please blow your nose with a tissue from the box next to the sink," she says. "Then wash your hands." Lacey, the last one to arrive, comes in with her father. "Hi Lacey," says Ms. Nunes. "Did you wake up late?" "Yeah," says Lacey, "I have a stomach ache, too." Ms. Nunes feels Lacey's head. "Hmm," she says to Lacey's father. "She feels a little warm. Let's take her temperature." Suddenly Lacey runs for the bathroom, yelling, "I'm going to be sick." Ms. Nunes follows Lacey to the bathroom. Lacey has already vomited, so Ms. Nunes helps her splash water on her face. She gives her a cup of water to rinse out her mouth. They both wash their hands. "There go some germs down the drain," says Lacey. "Good!" says Ms. Nunes. "You look very pale. Let's go tell your Dad you need to go home."

1. What are three things Ms. Nunes did to maintain a healthy environment?

____

____

____

2. What did Ms. Nunes do to keep germs from spreading?

____

____

____

Encouraging Children to Develop Health Habits That Promote Good Hygiene and Nutrition

Mr. Berry begins the first meeting of the Quick and Easy Cooking Club by asking children what their favorite fast foods are. Several children respond at once. "I love burgers; they're real juicy." "Yeah, big burgers!" "What makes the burgers so juicy?" asks Mr. Berry. "Well, the fat, I guess," says Tommy. Mr. Berry continues, "Do you know how much fat is in one burger?" "How much?" asks Tommy. "Well, about nine teaspoons of fat." "Is that a lot?" asks Julie. Mr. Berry offers Julie a measuring spoon, a tin of lard, and a plate. Horrified, the others watch Julie measure nine teaspoons of lard. "Do you want to taste it?" asks Mr. Berry . "Gross!" says Julie. "No way!" "Me neither!" says Tommy. "Let's not cook anything with fat in it!"

Mr. Berry suggests looking for recipes that don't use a lot of fat or other unhealthy ingredients, like salt and sugar. They talk about cooking techniques such as broiling, baking, and "frying" with water, which reduce the amount of fat in foods. "Today, we'll make bagel pizzas with tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and herbs and spices for flavor. The sauce is low-salt and the cheese is part-skim, which means it doesn't have as much fat as some other cheeses. It's one of my favorite snacks. Then you can look through the recipe books and find some healthy snacks to make next time. Before we handle the food, we all need to wash our hands."

1. How did Mr. Berry help the children develop healthy habits?

2. How did Mr. Berry teach the children about good nutrition?

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Ms. Charles has worked at the school-age program for as long as Carolyn has been enrolled. They have a close relationship. Carolyn is usually friendly and outgoing and gets along well with children of all ages. Lately, she's been spending more time alone than usual. She's been reluctant to get involved in activities that used to be of interest, and she's been short-tempered with the younger children. Today, while they are walking back from the bowling alley, Carolyn says, "My big brother isn't nice. He made me do something really bad. I hate him." Ms. Charles asks Carolyn if she'd like to talk about it. "Yes," says Carolyn, her eyes full of tears. "I have to tell someone." Ms. Charles asks another staff member to take her place. She and Carolyn go to the director's office for a private conversation. After a few silent minutes, Carolyn begins talking. "My brother makes me touch him, you know, in his underpants," she says. They talk for a while, then Ms. Charles tells Carolyn she did the right thing by telling someone about her brother. Trying to respond without overstepping the bounds of her role she says, "Your brother's behavior is not okay. You haven't done anything wrong."

Ms. Charles immediately tells the director, Ms. Lee, about the changes she observed in Carolyn's behavior and what she said about her brother. They discuss the signs of possible child abuse. Ms. Lee says, "I'm glad you came to me with this situation." She is pleased Ms. Charles remembers it is her responsibility to file a report to the Child Protective Services (CPS). Ms. Lee suggests that Ms. Charles first write down her observations and concerns so this information will be available when she files the report to CPS. She reminds Ms. Charles to keep the information confidential. Ms. Charles calls CPS; she then calls Carolyn's parents to let them know she has filed a report. CPS sends someone to the program to investigate.

1. What are the clues to possible child abuse in this situation?

____

____

____

2. **How did Ms. Lee support Ms. Charles?**

Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Health and Nutrition

Staying healthy can improve your life.

Most of us know good health and proper nutrition are important. The national focus on staying fit—which is stressed in the media, in schools, and at the workplace—has provided much useful information and has led to an increased motivation to stay healthy. We have learned that staying healthy improves the quality of life and can actually prolong life.

Most of us know what to do to stay healthy. We try to improve our health by doing the right things—and when we do, we tend to feel better about ourselves. Perhaps you have done some of the following things to improve your health:

- Begun walking or jogging more often.
- Joined an aerobics class or exercise program.
- Quit smoking or vowed never to start.
- Increased the variety of foods in your diet to include more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products.
- Lost weight using a sensible diet.
- Began eating more starchy foods and less sugar, fats, and salt.
- Decreased the amount of unnecessary stress in your life.
- Discovered the positive effects of relaxation techniques.

Improve your health and nutrition one step at a time.

You may have found, though, that changing too much too quickly led to failure. Have you found yourself saying these things?

- "I tried quitting smoking but I felt like I was going crazy, and I couldn't stop eating!"
- "I don't have time to jog and still manage to go to work, cook for my family, and keep the lawn mowed."
- "Well, I'd like to cook healthier foods for my family, but it takes so long to plan and prepare. It's just easier to get fast foods."

Changing our health and nutrition habits can be hard. It is one thing to know what to do; it is something quite different actually to do it. Being judgmental and critical of ourselves only makes us feel worse.

An old proverb states, "If we don't change our direction, we will very likely end up in the place we're headed." We might as well do all we can to ensure our own success by being gentle with ourselves and appreciating each step we take in our desired direction. Because doing everything "right" is very hard, you might think in terms of more and less. You want to do more of certain good things, such as:

- exercising;
- eating foods low in fats, salt, and sugar;
- getting enough sleep; and
- spending time with family and friends.

You want to do less of or stop doing certain unhealthy things, such as:

- smoking;
- eating fattening, salty foods;
- drinking alcohol; and
- letting stress build up.

Keeping in mind your whole state of well-being—physical, mental, and social—take time to answer the questions below. Your answers are personal and don't have to be shared with anyone.

What healthy habits do you want to maintain or improve?

What unhealthy habits do you want to decrease?

How do you feel your health affects your work?

List three concrete, specific steps you will take to maintain healthy or change unhealthy habits.

1. ____________________

2. ____________________

3. ____________________

Give yourself the positive support and appreciation you would give your best friend, and you are very likely to succeed!

As a reference, we have included a summary of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a copy of the "food pyramid." You will find these resources on the following pages.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions of the terms used.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans[1]

Eat a variety of foods.

Eat a variety of foods daily in adequate amounts, including selections of the following:

fruits
vegetables;
whole-grain and enriched breads, cereals, and other foods made from grains;
milk, cheese, yogurt, and other products made from milk; and
meats, poultry, fish, eggs, and dried beans and peas.

Women and adolescent girls should eat calcium-rich foods, such as milk and milk products, for strong bones.

Young children and women should eat iron-rich foods, such as beans, cereals, and grain products.

Maintain healthy weight.

Eat a variety of foods that are low in calories and high in nutrients:

more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains;
less fat and fatty foods;
less sugar and fewer sweets; and
fewer alcoholic beverages.

Increase your physical activity.

Eat slowly.

Take smaller portions.

Avoid second helpings.

Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.

Choose lean meat, fish, poultry, and dried beans and peas as protein sources.

Use skim or low-fat milk and milk products.

Moderate your intake of egg yolks and organ meats.

Limit your intake of fats and oils, especially those high in saturated fat, such as butter, cream, lard, heavily hydrogenated fats (some margarines), shortenings, and foods containing palm and coconut oils.

Trim fat off meats.

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[1] Based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 3rd edition (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

Broil, bake, or boil rather than fry.

Moderate your intake of foods that contain fat, such as breaded and deep-fried foods.

Read labels carefully to determine both the amount and type of fat present in foods.

Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grain products.

Choose foods high in fiber and starch, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, dry beans and peas.

Eat at least three servings of vegetables and two fruits daily.

Have six or more servings of grain products (breads, cereals, pasta, and rice) daily.

Substitute starchy foods for those with large amounts of fats and sugars.

Use sugar in moderation.

Use less of all sugars and foods containing large amounts of sugars, including white sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, honey, and syrups (soft drinks, candies, cakes, and cookies).

Avoid eating sweets between meals. How often you eat sugar and sugar-containing food is even more important to the health of your teeth than how much sugar you eat.

Read food labels for clues on sugar content. If the word sugar, sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, lactose, fructose, or syrup appears first, then the food contains a large amount of sugar.

Eat fresh fruits or fruits processed without syrup or with light rather than heavy syrup.

Brush with a fluoride toothpaste and floss regularly.

Use salt in moderation.

Limit your intake of salty foods such as potato chips, pretzels, salted nuts, popcorn, condiments (soy sauce, steak sauce, garlic salt), pickled foods, cured meats, some cheeses, and some canned vegetables and soups.

Learn to enjoy the flavors of unsalted foods.

Cook without salt or with only small amounts of added salt.

Try flavoring foods with herbs, spices, and lemon juice.

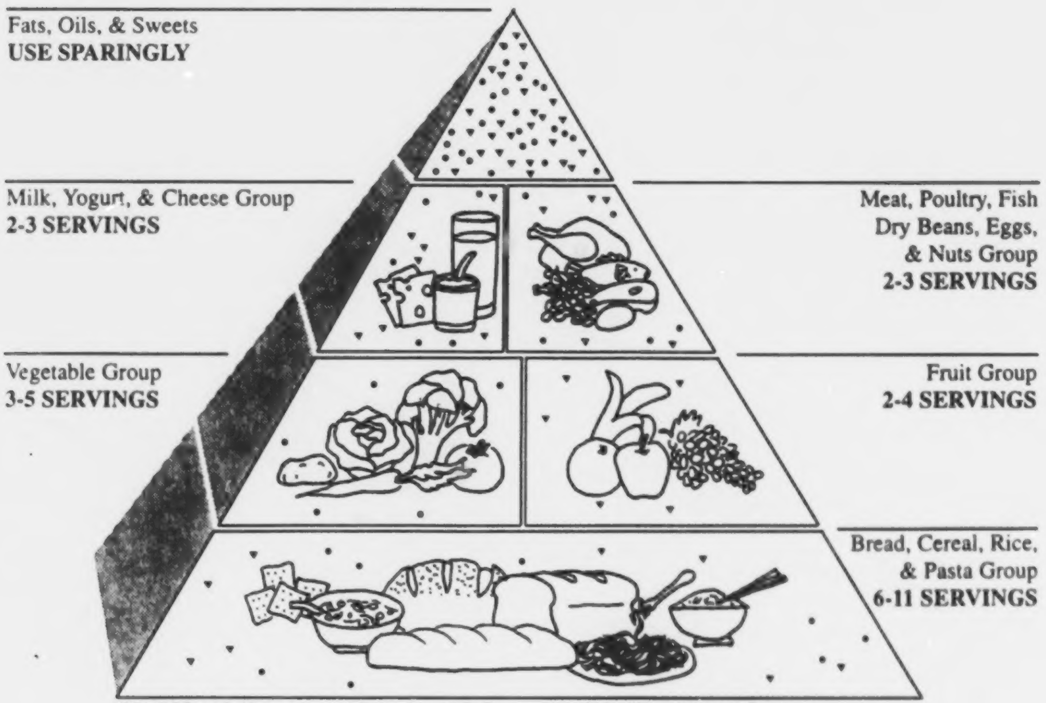
Add little or no salt to food at the table.

Read food labels carefully to determine the amounts of sodium they contain. Use lower-sodium products when available.

The Food Guide Pyramid

A Guide to Daily Food Choices

KEY
• Fat (naturally occurring and added)
▾ Sugars (added)
These symbols show that fat and added sugars come mostly from the fats, oils, and sweets group. However, foods in other groups, like ice cream from the milk group or french fries from the vegetable group, can also be a source of fat and added sugars.


Fats, Oils, & Sweets
USE SPARINGLY
Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group
2-3 SERVINGS
Meat, Poultry, Fish
Dry Beans, Eggs,
& Nuts Group
2-3 SERVINGS
Vegetable Group
3-5 SERVINGS
Fruit Group
2-4 SERVINGS
Bread, Cereal, Rice,
& Pasta Group
6-11 SERVINGS

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to help children stay healthy. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Promote Wellness and Reduce the Spread of Disease		**I Do This**	
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Checking the facility daily for adequate ventilation and lighting, comfortable room temperature, and good sanitation.	☐	☐	☐
2. Opening windows daily to let in fresh air.	☐	☐	☐
3. Placing tissues, paper towels, and soap within children's reach; asking children to help keep them stocked.	☐	☐	☐
4. Washing hands and encouraging children to wash theirs using techniques recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.	☐	☐	☐
5. Maintaining a positive, relaxed, and pleasant program atmosphere to reduce tension and stress.	☐	☐	☐
6. Completing daily health checks and being alert to symptoms of illness.	☐	☐	☐
7. Recognizing symptoms of common childhood illnesses, syndromes, and progressive diseases.			
8. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces before using for food preparation.	☐	☐	☐
Encouraging Children to Develop Health Habits That Promote Good Hygiene and Nutrition			
9. Planning a flexible schedule that includes time for outdoor activities and responds to children's physical needs.	☐	☐	☐
10. Serving family-style meals and eating with children in a relaxing manner.	☐	☐	☐
11. Offering self-service snack so children can determine when, what, and how much to eat.	☐	☐	☐

Encouraging Children to Develop Health Habits That Promote Good Hygiene and Nutrition (continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
12. Providing opportunities for children to plan, prepare, and serve meals and snacks.	☐	☐	☐
13. Providing resources on health and hygiene, such as magazines, books, pamphlets, and visiting health professionals.	☐	☐	☐
14. Keeping a supply of sanitary pads and tampons in the girls' bathroom and making sure girls know where they are.	☐	☐	☐
15. Encouraging children to drink water and take breaks when exercising or outdoors on hot days.	☐	☐	☐
16. Modeling habits that promote good health and nutrition.	☐	☐	☐
17. Helping children learn to recognize, reduce, and cope with stress.	☐	☐	☐

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

18. Learning the definitions of different kinds of child abuse and neglect.	☐	☐	☐
19. Recognizing the physical and behavioral signs of possible physical, sexual, and emotional child abuse and neglect.	☐	☐	☐
20. Protecting children by reporting suspected abuse or neglect without waiting for proof.			
21. Knowing and following state laws and program regulations for reporting suspected abuse and neglect.	☐	☐	☐
22. Maintaining confidentiality after filing a report of suspected child maltreatment.	☐	☐	☐
23. Supporting families and helping them get the services they need.			

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 2, Healthy.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. Maintaining a Hygienic Environment 101
II. Encouraging Healthy Habits 114
III. Helping Children Cope With Stress 124
IV. Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect 132
V. Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect 142

Learning Activity I.

Maintaining a Hygienic Environment

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- provide and maintain a hygienic environment, involving children when possible; and
- recognize symptoms of illness in school-age children.

It's important to maintain a hygienic environment.

What can you do to maintain a hygienic environment? First, you can check the environment daily to see it is clean and uncluttered. Even when custodial staff clean your facility, you should do a daily check. If you operate in shared space, you need to coordinate your efforts with others who use the space to ensure it is ready for each group each day. Report any problems to your supervisor. It is your job to be sure the space used by the program promotes wellness and minimizes or reduces the incidence of illness and disease.

It's important to keep your environment in good condition during the time the program is operating. You can do this by cleaning spills as they happen, disinfecting tables before and after eating, or after the program's pet gerbil has been for a walk; storing food properly; and throwing away garbage promptly. The children can assist with these chores. Keep tissues, soap, and paper towels within their reach.

Germs can be passed from child to child.

In addition, you need to ensure your space is sanitary. Bacteria, parasites, or viruses can be left by sick children on tables, materials, and equipment or can grow on perishable foods. Most diseases contracted by children are highly contagious; therefore, it is very likely that when one child in the program gets sick, the germs will be passed on to the others. Diseases can be spread through bodily secretions (when a child sneezes), by direct contact (when children share food), and even when a child seems perfectly healthy (when a child is coming down with chicken pox).

Lice Happen!

Even when the school-age program practices good hygiene, you may experience an outbreak of head lice—tiny, brown parasites that make themselves at home on people's heads. Adult lice lay three to four eggs (nits) a day on human hair strands, about 3/4" from the scalp. Ten days later the eggs hatch, and nymphs emerge and begin to bite the scalp. These bites make a person's head itch. If you see a child scratching his or her head repeatedly (or your head itches), lice may be the cause. You may see the tiny white nits attached to strands of hair, or the adult lice moving around. Nits, unlike dandruff, do not move when the hair is moved. Do not panic! Lice are quite common, do not carry diseases, and are not caused by unsanitary conditions. They are, however, extremely hardy, have a 30-day life cycle, and are easily transferred from one child to another—either from head to head or from pillows, rugs, seat backs, combs, bedding, hats, and so on. You need to respond immediately to rid the children and the program environment from adults, eggs, and nymphs.

Enlist the help of parents.

It's a good idea to have a letter on lice ready to be reproduced and distributed to parents. A similar letter can be sent to the elementary schools attended by the children so teachers and janitorial staff can be alert to the problem. A joint home, school, and program campaign is needed to get rid of these creatures.

Use a light-hearted tone for the letter to parents. Let them know that "lice happen," they are harmless and nothing to be ashamed of. Include the following information in the letter:

- Explain the life cycle so parents know that their approach to ridding their child and home of lice needs to be thorough and vigorous.
- Provide instructions on identifying lice and how to respond. Parents should call their pediatrician and ask about appropriate shampoos that will kill the lice. The shampoo directions should be followed carefully. Parents or children can use a fine-toothed comb to remove the dead adults and nits.
- Remind parents to check the whole family, children and adults, and use the same shampoo for all who are infested.
- Explain the importance of cleaning all items lice might have traveled to such as bedding, hats, clothes, scarves, stuffed animals, combs, brushes, pillows, carpets, and furniture. This involves sending things to the dry cleaner, washing them in water at least 140 degrees, or placing items in a plastic bag for 35 days (five days beyond the life cycle). They can use the anti-lice shampoo to soak combs and brushes. Carpets, upholstery, and mattresses should be thoroughly vacuumed and the vacuum bags tied in plastic and placed in outside trash cans.
- Remind parents to continue checking their children over the next few weeks. Children who are free of lice today, could

still get them after the eggs hatch. That is why it is important to remove all nits with a comb.

- Ask parents to let you know if their child does have lice, so you can keep track of the seriousness of the incidence.

A comprehensive campaign is needed to get rid of lice.

An equally thorough response is needed at the program. Begin by checking all staff. You may also need to use a special shampoo. Let the children know that lice have been found and that you are beginning an all-out strategy to rid the program of these creatures. Explain that they are harmless, not caused by anyone's actions, and not the result of someone being dirty or careless. You can use the outbreak as a "teachable moment." Provide lots information about lice and similar parasites and what we can do to remove them and prevent their spread. For example, this would be a good time to remind children to not share combs, brushes, or hats.

Using one of the methods described above, you need to clean all items at the program to which lice may have attached. In addition to items such as those listed already, you must clean costumes, dress-up clothes (especially hats), carpet squares, wigs, beanbag chairs, the contents of the extra hats and gloves box, and so on. Once you have survived your first lice incidence, you will be better prepared to tackle the next—and there will be one. As long as children go to school and play in groups, lice are likely to follow. Lice have probably been around longer than humans, and may outlive us all.

Disinfecting Materials and Equipment

The program's materials and equipment should be disinfected periodically. Begin by thoroughly washing surfaces with soap and water. Next, rinse with water to remove the soap solution. Then apply the appropriate bleach solution as described in the chart that follows, made fresh daily. You are not likely to use the second solution often, as school-age children do not usually mouth items. It is provided in case some of the younger children occasionally put things in their mouths.

Finally, allow the surfaces or objects to air dry. Wash and disinfect surfaces children are likely to touch (floors, doorknobs, shelves) at least weekly.

Use This Bleach Solution	To Clean These Items
1/4 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water or 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart of water	All surfaces except play materials, including: tabletops and counters bathroom walls door frames mops, brooms, and dustpans used to wipe up body fluid spills
1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water or 1 teaspoon of bleach to 1 quart of water	All objects children have put in their mouths.

The bedding used by younger children must be washed and disinfected.

Children who attend a half-day kindergarten may nap or rest at the program. Each child should have a sheet and blanket for napping. These must be laundered at least once a week. Wash and disinfect mats and cots at least weekly if children use the same mat each day. If a different child uses the mat each day, it must be disinfected daily.

The bathroom is a major source of germs. You should check this room daily to make sure it is clean and stocked with enough soap and paper supplies. Report problems and missing items to the custodial staff or to your supervisor.

If your program has pets, cages must be cleaned frequently. Program pets need to be up-to-date on their shots and should be checked by a veterinarian monthly to ensure they are healthy and free from diseases. The animals need food and clean water daily to stay in good health. Children learn important health concepts by caring for pets.

Handwashing Procedures[2]

Health professionals state the most effective way to reduce illness is for staff and children to wash their hands properly throughout the day. Good handwashing techniques reduce the spread of disease in child care by 50 percent and protect adults and children from serious illnesses. Wash your own hands:

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[2] Based on Centers for Disease Control, *What You Should Know About Contagious Diseases in the Day Care Setting* (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control, 1984).

- before the first child arrives (before and after school);
- before preparing or serving food;
- before and after handling body secretions (for example, wiping your nose, helping a child who is vomiting, helping stop a nose bleed);
- before and after administering medication;
- after helping a child who may have a contagious condition; and
- after using the bathroom yourself.

Make sure children wash their hands:

- when they arrive at the program;
- before and after food preparation activities;
- before and after eating;
- after using the toilet;
- after wiping their noses;
- after a nose bleed;
- after vomiting;
- after handling pets;
- after touching a child who may have a contagious condition;
- before participating in water play; and
- after outdoor play.

Use the following procedures for handwashing (as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control) and teach them to the children so they can follow them each time they wash their hands. School-age children are not too old to need reminders to wash their hands. You can post signs in the bathrooms and next to sinks to remind children when and how to wash their hands:

- Use soap and running water.
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them.
- Wash all surfaces: backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails.
- Rinse your hands well. Leave the water running.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel. Don't use the towel again.
- Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands.

Symptoms of Common Childhood Illnesses

Even in an apparently spotless and sanitary environment, there will be germs. Children may come to the program with a variety of illnesses and may be contagious before they develop symptoms. You must be aware of the symptoms and incubation periods for common childhood illnesses. The chart on the next page summarizes this information.

If a child in your group has a severe cold or the symptoms of another illness noted in the chart, he or she should not attend the program while ill. Parents need to inform you if their child has recently been exposed to one of these illnesses. Then you can be careful to ensure all children and staff take necessary precautions to keep the illness from spreading.

Daily health checks help identify illness.

A daily health check upon arrival at the program will help you identify children who may be ill. As you take attendance and greet children, be alert for the following symptoms:

- difficulty breathing;
- yellowish skin or eyes;
- unusual spots or rashes;
- feverish appearance;
- severe coughing (red or blue in the face, high-pitched croup or whooping sound);
- pinkeye (tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge of pus);
- infected skin patches or crusty, bright-yellow, dry, or gummy skin areas; and
- unusual behavior (child is cranky, less active than usual, or more irritable than usual; child feels general discomfort or just seems unwell).

During the program's operation, be alert for other signs that signify illness:

- frequent trips to the bathroom;
- complaints about difficulties going to the bathroom;
- sore throat or trouble swallowing;
- headache or stiff neck;
- nausea and vomiting;
- loss of appetite; and
- frequent scratching of the body or scalp (may be a sign of lice or scabies).

Contagious Diseases[3]

Diseases spread through the intestinal tract	Symptoms	When child can return to the program
Diarrheal diseases	Excess of liquid in stools and five or more stools in an 8-hour period.	The child no longer has diarrhea. If due to infection, 24 hours after treatment has begun.
Vomiting	Abdominal pain, digested/ undigested stomach contents, refusal to eat, headache, fever.	When vomiting has stopped.
Hepatitis A	Fever, loss of appetite, nausea, yellowish skin and whites of the eyes, dark brown urine, light-colored stool.	One week after illness begins, if fever is gone.
Hepatitis B	Fever, yellowing of skin and whites of eyes, loss of appetite, nausea, joint pains, rash, weakness.	When fever is gone, skin lesions are dry or covered, and child can participate.

Diseases spread through the respiratory system	Symptoms	When child can return to the program
Bacterial meningitis	Younger children: fever, vomiting, unusual irritability, excessive crying with inability to be comforted, high-pitched crying, poor feeding, and activity levels below normal. Older children: fever, headache, neck pain or stiffness, vomiting (often without abdominal complaints), and a decrease in activity associated with not feeling well.	After fever is gone and a closely supervised program of antibiotics is completed. Health Department may recommend preventive medicine for exposed children and staff.
Colds and flu	Colds: stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, coughing, watery eyes, and perhaps a fever. Flu: sore throat, fever, muscular aches, and chills.	Once coughing has subsided, fever is gone, and child can participate in daily activities.
Strep throat	Red and painful throat, often accompanied by fever.	Generally when fever has subsided and child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

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[3] Based on Centers for Disease Control, *What You Should Know About Contagious Diseases in the Day Care Setting* (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control, December 1984), and PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, *Model Child Care Health Policies* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, December 1993).

Contagious Diseases

(continued)

Diseases spread by direct contact (touching)	Symptoms	When child can return to the program
Chicken pox	Fever, runny nose, cough, rash (pink/red blisters).	Six days after onset of rash or when lesions are crusted and dry.
Head lice	Whitish-gray dots attached to hair shafts.	After treatment and child's clothes and bedding are washed in hot water (140° F) to destroy lice and eggs.
Impetigo	Red oozing erosion capped with a golden yellow crust that appears stuck on.	Twenty-four hours after treatment has begun.
Scabies	Crusty wavy ridges and tunnels in the webs of fingers, hand, wrist, and trunk.	Twenty-four hours after treatment has begun.
Measles	Fever, runny nose, cough, and red-brown blotchy rash on the face and body.	Six days after the rash appears.
Mumps	Swelling of the glands at the jaw angle accompanied by cold-like symptoms.	After swelling subsides or nine days after swelling begins.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Cold-like symptoms that develop into severe respiratory disease with repeated attacks of violent coughing.	Three weeks after intense coughing begins or five days after antibiotic treatment has begun.
Ringworm	Skin-reddish scaling, circular patches with raised edges and central clearing or light and dark patches on face and upper trunk or cracking peeling of skin between toes. Scalp-redness, scaling of scalp with broken hairs or patches of hair loss.	Twenty-four hours after treatment is begun.
Pinkeye, Conjunctivitis	Eyes are pink/red, watery, itchy, lid swollen, sometimes painful.	Twenty-four hours after treatment is begun.

Older school-age children may be self-conscious about bodily functions. For example, a child may find it embarrassing to tell someone he has diarrhea or that he feels constipated. Staff need to be especially aware of subtle mood or behavioral changes that may indicate a child is not feeling well.

If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms, separate him or her from the other children and contact the child's parents. Be sure to inform your supervisor. It is a good idea to designate an area where sick children can rest and be cared for until taken home.

What School-Age Staff Need to Know About HIV

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). HIV attacks the white blood cells in the immune system that normally protect the body from viruses and bacteria. This makes it difficult and gradually impossible for the body to fight off infection.

HIV is not transmitted through casual contact or from being around someone who is infected. It cannot be transmitted by mosquitoes or pets. The virus does not live by itself in the air. You cannot get it by:

- being in the same room with someone;
- sharing drinks or food;
- being near when someone coughs or sneezes;
- hugging, shaking hands, or kissing as friends do;
- sharing a swimming pool, bath, or toilet; or
- sharing bed linens or towels.

HIV is transmitted in several ways.

HIV is transmitted through blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. A person can become infected:

From mother to child (perinatal). Most children under age 13 with HIV are infected this way. If the mother has HIV, her blood can transmit the virus to the baby during pregnancy or delivery. Because HIV has been found in breast milk, mothers with HIV infection are discouraged from breastfeeding.

Through sexual intercourse with a man or woman who has HIV. Sexually abused children are at risk for HIV infection.

By sharing intravenous needles that contain infected blood from a previous user.

From blood and blood product transfusions prior to 1985, before blood was tested for HIV infection. Many children were infected this way, including those with hemophilia.

Children with HIV infection can remain healthy for long periods of time. They have AIDS when the virus has severely damaged the immune system. Because children with HIV infection are more susceptible to germs, good hygiene is very important. Since HIV is carried in the blood, you should **always** create a "barrier" between yourself and any person's blood when cleaning a cut or applying pressure to a bloody nose. A towel, rolled cloth, paper towel, or disposable gloves can be a barrier.

Children with HIV infection may have special nutrition and therapy needs. If you are caring for a child with HIV infection, find out if specific training in these areas is available.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you invite two children to help you assess the program's hygiene routines. Together, you use a health and hygiene checklist to identify items that need your attention. Next, you discuss routines that need to be improved and plan ways to improve them. Although it may be difficult for the children to assess some of the items (for example, number 17), this is a good opportunity to model the importance of good hygiene.

Health and Hygiene Checklist

Date: ____________________

Health and Hygiene Checkers: ____________________

Routines to Maintain a Healthy Environment	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1. Let in fresh air daily by opening windows or doors.	☐	☐
2. Check the space daily to make sure it is clean.	☐	☐
3. Store toothbrushes so they don't touch each other and can air dry. (Children should brush their teeth after eating when the program operates for a full day.)	☐	☐
4. Ask children to wipe off tables after eating and messy activities.	☐	☐
5. Date, label, and store food so it does not spoil.	☐	☐
6. Put garbage in metal or plastic pails lined with plastic bags, with lids, and empty them daily.	☐	☐
7. Keep tissues, paper towels, and soap where children can reach them.	☐	☐
8. Check the bathroom daily to make sure it is clean and well stocked with toilet paper, soap, and paper towels.	☐	☐
9. Follow a flexible daily schedule to meet children's needs for activity and rest.	☐	☐
10. Call parents to ask them to pick up a sick child, and separate the child from others.	☐	☐
11. Ensure kindergarten children's sheets and blankets are laundered weekly.	☐	☐
12. Prepare fresh bleach solution daily.	☐	☐
13. Wash and disinfect play materials weekly.	☐	☐
14. Rinse brooms, dustpans, mops, and rags in a bleach solution after cleaning body fluid spills.	☐	☐

Routines to Maintain a Healthy Environment	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
15. Wash your own hands:		
• before the first child arrives	☐	☐
• before preparing or serving food	☐	☐
• before and after handling bodily secretions (for example, wiping your nose, helping a child who is vomiting, helping stop a nose bleed)	☐	☐
• before and after administering medication	☐	☐
• before and after helping a young child use the toilet	☐	☐
• after caring for a child who may have a contagious condition	☐	☐
• after using the bathroom yourself	☐	☐
16. Remind children to wash their hands:		
• when they arrive at the program	☐	☐
• before and after food preparation	☐	☐
• before and after eating	☐	☐
• before participating in water play	☐	☐
• after using the toilet	☐	☐
• after wiping their noses	☐	☐
• after a nose bleed	☐	☐
• after vomiting	☐	☐
• after handling pets	☐	☐
• after touching a child who may have a contagious condition	☐	☐
• after outdoor play	☐	☐
17. Conduct a daily health check as children arrive to be alert for:		
• severe coughing, difficulty breathing, or sore throat	☐	☐
• yellowish skin or eyes	☐	☐
• pinkeye (tears, redness of eye lining, irritation, swelling and discharge of pus)	☐	☐
• infected skin patches	☐	☐
• nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea	☐	☐
• loss of appetite	☐	☐
• unusual behavior	☐	☐

Review the items on the checklist you and the children have found in need of improvement, and list them on the blank chart that follows. Then identify the improvement strategies you plan to use.

Items Needing Improvement	Improvement Strategies

Discuss these improvement strategies with the children who helped you complete the checklist, your colleagues, and your trainer. Make the needed changes in your routines, and ask the children to check them off when they have been completed.

Learning Activity II.
Encouraging Healthy Habits

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- teach children that healthy bodies need a variety of foods every day; and
- help children select and enjoy nutritious foods for snacks and meals.

School-age children tend to be concerned about body image.

Many school-age children tie their social success to looking and behaving just like their friends. As they develop and mature, body image becomes increasingly important, and the desire to have a certain kind of body may lead to unhealthy practices. Additional pressure to look or act a certain way comes from advertisements on television and in magazines. These pressures may cause school-age children to follow unhealthy diets or experiment with sex, drugs, or alcohol. In his book *Kid Fitness,* Dr. Kenneth Cooper cites the following examples of what can happen when children have poor body images: "a 1989 study in *Pediatrics* revealed 45 percent of boys and girls in grades three through six wanted to be thinner, 37 percent had already tried to lose weight, and nearly seven percent were in the anorexia nervosa category." Anorexia nervosa, an eating disorder, can lead to starvation and death.

In addition to children who are overly concerned with body image, some of the children in your program may be overweight. Medical professionals define obesity as a child being 20 percent above the ideal weight for his or her age, sex, and height. This means much of their total body weight consists of fat. Obesity has been associated with high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, heart disease, and numerous other medical problems. School-age staff should work with parents to help obese children learn healthy eating habits and to encourage their involvement in physical activities.

Growth spurts may lead to new concerns.

During growth spurts, children may be concerned about being taller, more awkward, or less attractive than their peers. They may worry about things like new body odors or pimples. Older girls may worry about getting their first menstrual period in school or at the school-age program. (It is a good idea to keep a supply of pads and tampons in the girls' bathroom. Be sure girls know where they are located, as some girls may be too embarrassed to ask for them.)

Children who are maturing at a slower pace than their peers also may worry about their body image. They may believe they are too short or look much younger compared to their friends. Both boys and girls are concerned about their bodies. Girls worry they will never develop breasts or a slimmer figure. Boys may be concerned because their muscles seem less developed than those of their friends.

As discussed earlier, most school-age children have the cognitive skills needed to develop healthy habits. Education about AIDS and birth control, or to discourage children from experimenting with sex, drugs, and alcohol, may be provided at school. Before addressing these topics, school-age programs should consult with parents and the schools to find out what is already being done. Whether or not the program provides this education, it is important to remember these topics are of concern to children.

School-age children need to learn about nutrition.

Teaching children good nutrition habits is a wise investment in their future. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. Attitudes about food develop early in life and are difficult to change.

Yet it isn't always easy to help school-age children develop good nutrition habits. They are often in a hurry and find it easier to eat unhealthy foods on the run. Children who feel fat—whether or not they are—may attempt to diet without knowing healthy ways to monitor their fat intake. It is not uncommon for children who are overly concerned about their weight to starve themselves all day, only to fix themselves a double-fudge chocolate sundae before dinner. As a result of consuming these "empty calories," they put on additional unwanted weight and deprive themselves of nutrients that would support their healthy growth and development.

Even children who know the importance of eating well may have trouble doing so. It's one thing to know about good nutrition; it's quite another to be motivated enough to eat healthy foods every day. This is especially true when friends do not think good eating habits are important or when a hectic pace of life leaves little time for eating right. Although school-age programs provide only a portion of the children's food intake, they can help children learn about the kinds of nutrients needed for healthy growth and development.

Much of the health and nutrition education that takes place in school-age programs is indirect. It occurs when you model healthy habits, serve a variety of healthy foods for snack, eat meals family-style, and offer cooking as a club, interest area, or special activity. These routines can be supplemented by activities such as talking with a visiting nutritionist, planting a vegetable garden, or conducting experiments to learn how the properties of different foods change when dried, boiled, broiled, baked, or fried.

The USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides funds which partially reimburse food costs to licensed public and nonprofit child care centers for nutritious meals and snacks served to children through age 12. For-profit child care centers can participate if they receive Title XX funding for at least 25 percent of the children enrolled. Meals and snacks served in programs enrolled in the CACFP must meet USDA guidelines for meal components and quantities For example, breakfast for children 6 to 12 years must include 1 cup of milk, 1/2 cup of full-strength juice or a fruit or vegetable, 1 slice of bread, and 1/2 cup of hot or cold cereal. To ensure that children receive nutritious snacks and meals, some foods may not be claimed for reimbursement. This requirement encourages programs to serve muffins rather than cakes, fresh vegetables rather than potato chips, and milk or juice rather than flavored drinks. The CACFP also provides training on topics such as nutrition, menu planing, family-style meals, sanitation, and using a variety of recipes. Ask the director if your program is enrolled in the CACFP. If not, suggest contacting your regional office of USDA to find out more about the benefits of enrolling in the CACFP.

Dental Health

An important topic related to nutrition is dental health. Almost everyone (98 percent of the population) gets cavities. Most children know sweet, sticky foods can cause cavities. They may not realize that to prevent tooth decay, the number of times sugar is consumed is more important than the amount.

Avoid serving foods that stick to teeth.

Nutritious foods are good for both bodies and teeth. In general, it is best to serve foods without added sugars. Sweet and sticky foods should not be served as between-meal snacks. Examples of such foods include candy, cake, cookies, cupcakes, pie, jelly, jam, soft drinks, fruit punch, or fruit drinks. Encourage children to brush their teeth after eating the following foods because they stick to the teeth:

- peanut butter
- crackers
- bananas
- dried fruits (apricots, prunes, figs, raisins)
- bread (except 100% whole wheat)
- canned fruit packed in syrup

Implementing Self-Service Snack

Some children arrive at the program after school ravenously hungry. Perhaps they didn't eat enough lunch or ate hours ago. Or perhaps they are at a stage where they need to eat often to replenish their energy. Other children are not hungry when they arrive. They may need some time to unwind and relax, to make the transition from school to after school. To meet these varied needs, you may want to set up a self-service snack that allows children to serve themselves over a period of time rather than all eating at a designated time.

A self-service snack area is recommended for a number of reasons.[4] Because children may have varied eating schedules outside the program, they may want to eat snack at different times. Children need different amounts of food during different developmental stages. Children of the same age often vary widely in the amount of food they require during the day. A self-service snack area allows children to prepare and serve their own snack and encourages them to eat as much or as little as they need.

Try these suggestions.

The following tips can help you provide a self-service snack area:

- Discuss with children how the area will work, how long it should be open, and procedures for serving, eating, and cleaning up.
- Assign a staff member to the area to assist children who request help, to visit with children and talk about the food being served, and to remind children to use safe, sanitary procedures as they serve, eat, and clean up.
- Have children make attractive signs to post in the area that include reminders of healthy eating habits and other guidelines about using the area.
- Involve children in planning, preparing, serving, and cleaning up.

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[4] Recommended in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs*, developed by Project Home Safe of the American Home Economics Association.

Serving and Eating Family-Style Meals

Children often eat breakfast at the school-age program, and during full-day sessions they also eat lunch. One way to make meal times relaxed and pleasant is to serve and eat meals family-style. This means that a staff member sits with a group of children at each table. Everyone eats the same foods, serves themselves, and enjoys pleasant conversation. After experiencing family-style dining, children are more likely to try new foods because they serve themselves. They can decide for themselves whether to put one pea on their plate or a spoonful. The following tips can help your program begin or enhance family-style dining.[5]

Try these suggestions before the meal.

- Provide or encourage food service staff to serve nutritious foods, including dessert—fresh fruit, blueberry muffins, applesauce, fruit juice, or cornbread.
- Arrange the furniture so tables are far enough apart to walk between but close enough for quiet conversation.
- Plan to seat five or six children and one adult at each table.
- Ask children who are assisting to set the tables.
- Serve the food in serving bowls or on platters.
- Serve drinks in pitchers so children can pour their own.
- Leave the salt and sugar off the table.
- Invite everyone to sit down after the tables are set.
- Suggest that before eating, everyone take a deep breath, relax, and think about how the food will make them strong and healthy.

Try these suggestions during the meal.

- Ask children and staff to begin serving as soon as everyone is seated.
- Maintain a leisurely pace so children don't feel hurried.
- Allow children to refuse food, but encourage them to taste a little of everything.
- Encourage children to serve themselves only as much as they can eat. If they can't finish what's on their plate, don't force them.
- Model good hygiene, safety practices, and manners.
- Ask children to clean up their own spills.
- Encourage conversation about the foods served, the day's events, or other topics of interest to the children.

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[5] Based on Elaine McLaughlin, Nancy Goldsmith, and Peter Pizzolongo, *Living and Teaching Nutrition* (College Park, MD: Head Start Resource and Training Center, 1983), p. 5-D.

- Respect cultural traditions and beliefs regarding mealtime rituals. For example, in some cultures, a respectful silence is appropriate before the meal begins and talking during meals is considered inappropriate.
- Remain relaxed.

Try these suggestions after the meal.

- Allow children to leave the table when finished. They can clean their dishes, wash their hands, brush their teeth, then choose an activity.
- Ask children to clean up and wash the table.

Cooking With Children[6]

Cooking is one of the best ways to teach children about nutrition. Each time you include children in preparing the snacks and meals they eat at the program, you are helping them develop good eating habits. Although some of the children may not know what vitamins or saturated fats are, spreading a vegetable cottage cheese dip on whole wheat crackers, and mashing bananas for muffins gives a much healthier message than opening a package of chocolate cookies or a bag of corn chips.

It is not necessary to plan special menus or use simplified versions of recipes to include children in cooking. The snacks and meals children cook can be part of the regular menu for the program. Through food preparation activities children develop self-help skills, improve small-muscle coordination, increase cognitive skills, socialize with friends, and share in the responsibilities of daily living. They will feel proud to help with the real work of snapping the ends off beans, cracking eggs, and stirring raisins and cinnamon into yogurt to make a dip. In addition, cooking is an activity that can be enjoyed by children of different ages. Each child can participate according to his or her interest and skill level. At times you can plan a more complex cooking activity for the older children; this is a time when they can feel special.

Cooking provides many opportunities for learning.

Here are some examples of the many learning opportunities that might take place during a cooking activity—making bread:

- learning what ingredients help make the bread nutritious (whole wheat flour, sunflower seeds, and nonfat dry milk);
- gaining a foundation in math (doubling the recipe to make two loaves);

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[6] Adapted with permission from Diane T. Dodge and Laura J. Colker, *The Creative Curriculum® for Family Child Care* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1991), pp. 196, 198.

- understanding scientific principles (observing how yeast makes the bread rise);
- expressing creativity (making braided loaves or loaves shaped like animals);
- working cooperatively (taking turns sifting the flour);
- developing responsibility (remembering to punch down the dough when the timer goes off);
- showing consideration for others (making room at the table for another baker);
- learning self-help skills (washing the dishes while the bread is rising);
- strengthening hand muscles (kneading the dough);
- coordinating eye and hand movements (carefully measuring the ingredients);
- having fun (enjoying cooking and eating as a group); and
- showing pride (wrapping up several pieces of bread to take home).

Children might enjoy making these simple foods.

Here are some simple foods school-age children might enjoy preparing for snack or meals:

Mashed potatoes. Children can peel potatoes, cut them into pieces, drop them into the cooking pot, and mash them after they cool. They may be surprised at how much tastier "real" potatoes are than frozen or dried versions.

Fresh vegetables and fruit—cooked or served raw with dips. Children can grate carrots, slice apples, shell peas, wash grapes, break the flowerettes off cauliflower or broccoli, and snap the ends off beans.

Blender fruit smoothies. Use milk, yogurt, and fresh fruits such as bananas, strawberries, peaches, or whatever is in season.

French toast. It's fun to crack eggs, add the milk, and beat the mixture until it's smooth. Children can sprinkle some cinnamon in the mix, then dip pieces of bread into the mixture. An electric fry pan will hold four to six pieces of bread.

Lemonade. Have children roll fresh lemons on the table top, then twist them on the juicer. Add some sugar and water to taste. Slice a lemon to put in the pitcher.

Pizzas. Spoon tomato sauce and sprinkle grated cheese and spices on crusts made from English muffins, French bread, pita bread, bagels, or freshly made dough.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some suggestions to help make cooking a success:

- Use a work table near an electrical outlet so children can plug in cooking appliances, such as a blender or mixer. If this is not possible, block off the area where the cords are hanging so children do not trip over them.
- Use an electric frying pan or wok as a substitute for a stove. Children find these appliances easy to manage, especially if they are used on a low work table.
- Provide duplicates of favorite utensils so the children won't be frustrated or lose interest while waiting for a turn. Have more than one vegetable peeler, vegetable scrubber, knife, spoon, grater, sifter, hand beater, potato masher, and so on. Parents might be willing to donate their duplicates of these items.
- Ask children to make signs and posters on cooking safety.
- Keep cleaning supplies such as mops, sponges, and paper towels within children's reach.
- Provide aprons or smocks made of old shirts for all children. Much of the pleasure in cooking comes from rigorously stirring batter and enthusiastically beating eggs.

Children can make recipe cards.

For younger children you can simplify recipes, and have them help you transfer the recipes to picture cards. On 5" x 8" pieces of cardboard, describe and illustrate each step in the recipe. Number each card so the steps in the recipe are easy to follow. Cover the cards with clear Contact paper to protect them. Children can lay out the picture cards left to right on the table so they can follow the recipe one step at a time. This will make them feel more independent and confident about what they're doing.

You can provide a variety of cookbooks (libraries usually have a good selection). Ask the children and their parents for suggestions for cooking projects. By cooking their favorite foods, you show respect for children and their families. This also allows you to introduce the concept of family traditions into your program.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you plan and conduct a cooking activity. Ask interested children to help select a recipe, develop picture cards, gather ingredients and equipment, and prepare the food. After conducting the activity, complete the blank form that follows. Begin by reading the example on the next page.

Cooking Activity

(Example)

Children/ages: *Karen, Maria, Gregory, Carlos, Deena, Troy (7 to 10 years)*

What you made: *Cheese burritos* **Date:** *April 23*

Describe what happened and how you involved the children.

We started a Cooking Club this week. For our first project, the children asked to make burritos. Deena said her dad made great cheese burritos. When Mr. Jansen, Deena's father, came to pick her up, I talked with him and he agreed to help. He gave me a list of ingredients and his recipe. Several children made recipe cards.

Today the children set up the recipe cards on the table next to the electric fry pan. Then they laid out the ingredients—wheat flour, shortening, salt, reduced fat cheese, onions, peppers, oil for the pan, salsa—and utensils—cheese graters, spatulas, spoons, pot holders, and knives. Troy asked why we were using shortening if it was bad for you. I explained, "We need some shortening so the tortillas will stay together when we cook them. It's all right to eat a little fat as long as we don't overdo it." Mr. Jansen brought his tortilla press.

The children followed the recipe cards to make the tortilla dough. After Deena demonstrated the technique, Mr. Jansen helped each child shape a tortilla and cook it in the fry pan. Children took turns making tortillas and grating cheese. Gregory explained how to hold the grater so they wouldn't scrape their fingers. We talked about how the calcium in cheese helps build strong bodies, and whether to make the burritos with cheese alone, with salsa, or with onions and peppers. I encouraged the children to taste the salsa and guess the ingredients. Gregory, Troy, and Maria said they wanted to chop up green peppers and onions for theirs and not have salsa. Carlos said he wanted the works—cheese, salsa, green and red peppers, and onions. I demonstrated how to use the knives safely. Once the burritos were assembled, we heated them in the broiler oven and had a feast.

What did the children learn from this activity?

How tortillas are made—most had only had store-bought tortillas.

How to make and appreciate a food from another culture.

Cheese helps develop strong bodies.

How to use graters and knives safely.

What a new food—salsa—tastes like.

When you repeat this activity, what changes (if any) would you make?

I'd suggest putting out other ingredients so children could make different kinds of burritos. I'd have two sessions of the club to accommodate more children. Once they smelled the burritos, everyone wanted a turn.

Cooking Activity

Children/ages : ____________________

What you made: ____________________ **Date:** ____________________

Describe what happened and how you involved the children.

What did the children learn from this activity?

When you repeat this activity, what changes (if any) would you make?

Discuss your answers with your trainer. Talk with other staff members about ways you can provide nutrition education activities in your program.

Learning Activity III.
Helping Children Cope With Stress

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- help children handle stress in healthy ways; and
- reduce sources of stress within the program.

Staff can help children learn healthy ways to cope with stress.

Simply put, stress is any change to which a person must adjust. Extreme and continuous stress in children can have serious health consequences, such as tense muscles, a pounding heart, quickened breathing, and slowed digestion. Stress may also cause children to have accidents and experience frequent physical symptoms and complaints, such as stomach aches, strep throat, and respiratory ailments. Severe stress may cause some children to withdraw, become deeply depressed, and even consider suicide. It is important for school-age staff to understand what causes stress and help children cope with stress in healthy ways.

We all experience a certain level of stress in our lives. We are stressed when we perceive a threat, regardless of whether the threat is real or imaginary. For example, Toni has just found out her family is moving to a new city. She worries about fitting in at her new school. Will she like the new school and make friends easily? Will she miss her old friends and feel left out at her new school? The threat Toni perceives (she will be left out and will miss her friends) may be real or imaginary. Because Toni doesn't know how the move will turn out, she may respond by panicking: "Nobody will like me, my teacher will be mean, I won't be able to do the work." Even if the move goes smoothly, Toni will still have to recover from the effects of feeling stressed.

Sometimes feelings of stress give children extra energy.

What is stressful for one person may not be for another; and, not all stress is negative. Many occasions children find joyous can be sources of stress. For example, Jake is very excited about his upcoming birthday party—for the first time he's invited several girls. Laura is going on vacation with her cousins—she can hardly think of anything else. Sometimes, feelings of stress can give children the extra energy they need to complete a difficult math problem, handle a dangerous situation, or respond in an emergency. In the case of Toni, stress may lead her to discuss the move with her parents, or it might cause her to try to be as friendly as possible at her new school. Either response would help Toni relieve her stress and handle the move more effectively.

Although change can be perceived as a threat, it can also be experienced as a challenge; it does not always have to be bad. When we perceive a situation as threatening, it is difficult to use problem-solving skills. However, when the situation is viewed as challenging, problem-solving skills can be used to cope with it.

Children vary in their responses to stress.

School-age children experience many kinds of stress. Some are related to common childhood fears. Others are related to conditions in society or within their families. Sensitivity to stress is as individual as each child. Some children can view a scary movie with no ill effects; others have nightmares for weeks after. Some children adjust easily to their parent's divorce; others respond by withdrawing or misbehaving.

Certain sources of stress faced by children have relatively short-term effects:

- having trouble finding something to wear to school;
- arguing with a friend;
- misplacing a homework assignment;
- getting ready for a party;
- feeling bored; or
- losing a game.

Other sources of stress can have more long-term effects:

- serious illness (the child's own or a family member's);
- divorce;
- being a victim of child abuse or neglect;
- witnessing spouse abuse;
- living in a neighborhood where violence is prevalent;
- getting used to a parent going to work;
- death of a parent or sibling; or
- being pressured by peers to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, or have sex.

There are healthy and unhealthy ways to handle stress.

It's almost impossible to eliminate all the sources of stress in children's lives. Instead, children need to learn how to cope in healthy ways so the stress does not become overwhelming. Most people (adults and children) handle stress using a variety of healthy and unhealthy strategies. The "healthy" strategies generally are more effective and really do relieve tension.

The following are examples of unhealthy and healthy ways children may handle stress.

- **Unhealthy** ways to handle stress include:

  overeating (particularly foods high in salt, fat, sugar, or caffeine);
  worrying;
  sleeping more or less than is needed;
  throwing, kicking, or breaking things;
  falling behind in school;
  abusing alcohol or other drugs;
  engaging in early sexual behavior;
  withdrawing from favorite friends and activities; and
  taking out frustration by mistreating friends, parents, siblings, teachers, or school-age staff.

- **Healthy** ways to handle stress include:

  exercising—taking a walk, going for a bike ride, dancing, doing aerobics, jumping on a trampoline;
  taking a shower or bath;
  meditation; yoga;
  listening to music;
  talking to someone about one's feelings;
  making a homework "to do" list and a schedule for completing work; and
  asking parents, teachers, staff, or other professionals for help.

The school-age program can reduce sources of stress.

The school-age program can play a significant role in reducing sources of stress and helping children handle stress in healthy ways. Some examples follow.

When offering a competitive activity, always offer an alternative. Some children find the stress of competition difficult to handle. They prefer to participate without worrying about winning or losing, or having their work judged.

> Mr. Wolfe tells the children about an upcoming photography contest. He also talks about a photography display the school-age program will set up in the lobby of their building.

Anticipate situations children may find stressful and take steps to minimize the stress. Many children find it easier to handle changes and new situations when they know about them in advance.

> Ms. Shere tells the children about next week's field trip to the state park. She places brochures describing the park in the quiet area. Tomorrow she will review the rules and procedures for field trips.

Listen to children when they express their feelings, and let them know you understand what they are saying. Very often children can overcome feelings of stress by talking about them. The talking releases their tension and allows them to move on.

> Ms. Marianno listens and responds to 9-year-old Zara. "You think Dana and Renée don't want to be your friends any more. Tell me more about what happened."

Conduct frequent observations of children in different settings to learn more about their behavior, interactions with others, favorite activities, sources of pain or frustration, and strategies for coping with frustration or stress. (Module 12, Program Management, discusses observation in depth.) Observation records are an excellent information source when a child's behavior seems unusual.

> Mr. Penn thinks Lionel is spending a lot of time by himself. He reviews the observation records for Lionel. The records confirm Lionel usually spends more time in group activities. He decides to spend some one-on-one time with Lionel. He thinks Lionel might feel like talking about what's bothering him.

Accept and respect each child as an individual. Avoid expecting all children to respond to a situation or behave in the same way. Remember, what is easy for one child may be a source of stress for another.

> Gina likes to jump into new games. She learns the rules while she is playing. Whit likes to watch for a while, then join in. He learns the rules by watching and listening to the other children.

Encourage children to recognize when they feel stress and to use their own techniques for stress management. Some children know themselves very well and are able to handle their stress without adult intervention.

> Charnelle knows she gets in more fights with her friends when she's feeling bad about her mom being away. When she begins to feel tense, she removes herself from the group and looks at magazines or listens to music.

Provide a variety of activities that help children release tension such as sand and water play, playdough and clay, open-ended art materials, books about children handling difficult situations, and active games and sports.

> Terrence wants to roller-skate, but all the skates are being used. Ms. Ross asks him if he would like to jog around the field with her until a pair of skates are free.

Arrange the environment so there are places where children can be alone when they need to take a break from the group—a single beanbag chair in a corner, a large open box set on its side and lined with pillows, a tape player and earphones, and a one-sided easel.

> Jasmine is having a hard time playing with the other children. She picks out a few books to read and curls up in the bean bag chair.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you select a child to observe for three days in various situations. Next, you review your observation notes to summarize what seems to cause the child to experience stress and how the child copes. Finally, you develop and implement a strategy to help reduce the stress and help the child cope more effectively. Review the example that follows, then begin the activity.

Helping Children Cope With Stress

(Example)

Child: *Dylan* **Age:** *8 years* **Dates:** *February 6-8*

Situation	Observation Summary
Departure for school	*The first day Dylan was flustered because he couldn't find his homework assignment. It had fallen on the floor, and someone had put it in Marcy's cubby. He yelled at Marcy and accused her of taking his paper on purpose.* *The second day went smoothly, no problems.* *The third day, Dylan wasn't ready when the bus came. He was finishing breakfast. (Breakfast was served late that day.)*
Arrival after school	*Dylan arrives each day with a smile on his face, full of energy and ideas about what he wants to do. He almost always helps with snack.*
Outdoor play	*The first day Dylan joined a game of kickball organized by Ms. Ross. He got on base a few times and scored a run. He stayed fully involved in the game.* *The next day was rainy, so Dylan went to the gym. He played basketball with some friends, but got into a fight when one of them "fouled" him. The friends said they weren't playing a real game, so it didn't count. He left the game before resolving the problem.* *The third day Dylan played volleyball, again led by Ms. Ross. She gave him some pointers for serving. He got the ball over the net.*

What situations might this child find stressful?

Dylan seems to feel stress when he makes the transition from the program to school.

He does well in adult-led games but may have trouble when he has to negotiate with other children.

What can you and your colleagues do to reduce stress for this child and help him/her cope with stress?

We can anticipate when Dylan might be feeling stress. For example, if breakfast is late, we can make sure Dylan has his stuff ready for school before he sits down to eat.

We can intervene to help Dylan solve disagreements with friends so they can continue their game. Also, we can teach him to use conflict resolution techniques.

Helping Children Cope With Stress

Child: ____________________ **Age:** ____________________ **Dates:** ________________

Complete the sections of this chart that are relevant to your program.

Situation	Observation Summary
Departure for school	
Arrival after school	
Outdoor play	
Group meeting	
Cleanup	

What situations might this child find stressful?

What can you and your colleagues do to reduce stress for this child and help him/her cope with stress?

Discuss this activity with your trainer and with your colleagues.

Learning Activity IV.
Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify the five types of child abuse and neglect; and
- recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse that occurs in a child's own home is called familial child abuse. Child abuse that occurs outside a child's home, for example in a child care program, is called institutional abuse. Child abuse and neglect cases are often first identified in a school-age program. Staff members who are in daily contact with children, often detect and report suspected child maltreatment that otherwise might go unnoticed. You are responsible for knowing how to identify signs of child abuse or neglect and to report your suspicions to the appropriate authorities. The first step is to know the definitions of child abuse and neglect in federal and state laws and how they apply to your program.

Child abuse and neglect is defined in Public Law 100-294.

Public Law 100-294 (reauthorized as the Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption and Family Service Act of 1992, Public Law 102-295) defines child abuse and neglect as:

> physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment
>
> - of a child under the age of 18, or except in the case of sexual abuse, the age specified by the child protection law of the State
> - by a person (including any employee of a residential facility or any staff person providing out-of-home care) who is responsible for the child's welfare [or any other person known or unknown to the child]
> - under circumstances which indicated that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby . . .

The Act defines sexual abuse as "the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct) for the purpose of

- producing any visual depiction of such conduct, or
- rape, molestation, prostitution, or
- incest with children . . ."

There are four types of child abuse and neglect.

Each state and many communities also have specific definitions of child maltreatment. Most definitions cover the following types of abuse:

- **physical abuse** which includes burning, kicking, biting, punching, or hitting a child;
- **sexual abuse** which includes using a child (can be by a child or adult) in any sexual context which includes fondling, rape, sodomy, and using a child in pornographic pictures or films;
- **emotional abuse or maltreatment** which includes blaming, belittling, ridiculing, badgering, and constantly ignoring a child's needs;
- **neglect** which includes failing to provide a child with food, clothing, medical attention, or supervision.

Child abuse and neglect could result from **acts** (doing something to injure a child) or **omissions** (not doing or taking actions necessary to protect a child) on the part of a responsible person.

Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Children who are being abused or neglected may exhibit physical and/or behavioral signs of their maltreatment. Physical signs are those you can actually see. Whether mild or severe, they involve the child's physical condition. Frequently, physical signs are skin or bone injuries, or evidence of lack of care and attention manifested in conditions such as malnutrition.

Behavioral clues may exist alone or may accompany physical indicators. They range from subtle changes in a child's behavior to graphic statements by children describing their abuse.

School-age staff play an important role in preventing or stopping child maltreatment by identifying and reporting signs of possible abuse or neglect. (Reporting is addressed in more detail in the next learning activity.) To fulfill this duty, you must be able to recognize the relevant signs.

Clues to abuse and neglect may be found in how a child looks and acts, what the parent says, how the parent relates to the child, and how the parent and child behave when they are together. No single sign or clue proves abuse or neglect, but repeated signs or several signs together should alert you and others to the **possibility** that a child is being abused or neglected.

Signs of possible physical abuse can be physical or behavioral.

Physical abuse of children includes any nonaccidental physical injury caused by the child's caretaker in single or repeated episodes. Although the injury is not accidental, the adult may not intend to hurt the child. The injury might be the result of overdiscipline or inappropriate physical punishment. This usually happens when an adult is angry or frustrated and strikes, shakes, or throws a child. Occasionally, physical abuse is intentional, such as when an adult burns, bites, pokes, cuts, twists limbs, or otherwise harms a child.

Active school-age children sometimes fall down and bump into things. These accidents may result in injuries to their elbows, chins, noses, foreheads, and other bony areas. Bruises and marks on the soft tissue of the face, back, neck, buttocks, upper arms, thighs, ankles, backs of legs, or genitals, however, are more likely to be caused by physical abuse.

When a child changes clothes to go swimming, or rolls up the sleeves of a shirt on a hot day, you might see bruises or burns that are covered by clothing. Often abusive parents are consciously or unconsciously aware that the signs of their abuse should be concealed, so they dress their children in long sleeves or long pants. Another sign to look for is bruises that are at various stages of healing, as if they are the result of more than one incident.

Injuries to the abdomen or head, which are particularly vulnerable spots, often go undetected until there are internal injuries. Injuries to the abdomen can cause swelling, tenderness, and vomiting. Injuries to the head may cause swelling, dizziness, blackouts, retinal detachment, and even death.

In addition to the physical signs that a child has been physically abused, the child **might** also exhibit behavioral signs. Here are some examples:

- When a staff member notices another big bruise on his leg, Troy tells her, "I fell down the stairs again."
- When Daniel is picked up by his mother, he often takes a long time to finish what he's doing before gathering his belongings. His mother uses this time to read notices on the bulletin board or talk with staff. When he sees his father come to get him, he quickly stops what he's doing, saying, "Uh oh, I've got to get my stuff ready. My dad doesn't like to wait." Earlier that day a staff member asked him about a drawing. Daniel told her, "This is a bad boy. He got a whipping because he acted like a baby."

Signs of possible child sexual abuse can be physical or behavioral.

Sexual abuse includes a wide range of behavior: fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or pornography. These behaviors are contacts or interactions between a child or adult (s) in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or another perpetrator (in this scenario, both are considered perpetrators of sexual abuse). Sexual abuse may be committed by a person under the age of 18 when that person is either significantly older than the victim or in a position of power or control over another child. For example, if a 14-year-old babysitter forces an 8-year-old child to look at his or her genitals, this would be considered exploitation, a form of sexual abuse. Although only 14 years old, this offender would be considered in a position of power over the child, and therefore his or her actions could be defined as sexual abuse.

The physical signs of sexual abuse include some that might be noticed by caregivers of younger children but are not generally noticed by school-age staff. Signs such as torn, stained, or bloody underclothing, or bruises or bleeding in the child's external genitalia, vaginal, or anal areas are likely to go unnoticed because school-age children go to the bathroom without adult assistance. However, if a child says that it hurts to walk or sit, or if he or she complains of pain or itching in the genital area, you should take note and watch to see if this is a recurring condition.

Children who have been sexually abused may also exhibit behavioral signs. They might act out their abuse with other children, or you might overhear them talking with other children about sexual acts. Their premature sexual knowledge is a sign that they have been exposed to sexual activity. They might show excessive curiosity about sexual activities or touch adults in the breast or genitals. Some children who have been sexually abused are very afraid of specific places, such as the bathroom. Older children who have been sexually abused may be very uncomfortable in situations where they have to undress. For example, such a child might avoid having to put on a swimsuit.

Some examples of signs that **might** indicate a child is being sexually maltreated include the following:

- The children and staff are outside on the playground. Simone needs to go inside to the bathroom. Jonathon says, "I have to go, too." Neil says, "But you just went." Jonathon insists he has to go, too. Simone says, "I don't have to go any more." Ten minutes later Simone comes up to Ms. Ellis and says, "Could you please come inside with me when I go to the bathroom? I don't want to go alone."

- The children are sitting at the table eating breakfast. Nancy is wiggling around in her seat a lot. A staff member asks her if she needs to go to the bathroom. Nancy says, "No, I'm just having trouble getting comfortable." For several days, Nancy continues to exhibit signs of discomfort when sitting.

Signs of possible emotional maltreatment are usually behavioral.

Emotional maltreatment includes blaming, belittling, or rejecting a child; constantly treating siblings unequally; or exhibiting a persistent lack of concern for the child's welfare. This type of maltreatment is the most difficult to identify, as the signs are rarely physical. The effects of mental injury, such as lags in physical development or speech disorders, are not as obvious as bruises and lacerations. Some effects might not show up for many years. Also, the behaviors of emotionally maltreated and emotionally disturbed children are often similar.

Although emotional maltreatment does occur alone, it often accompanies physical and sexual abuse. Emotionally abused children are not always physically abused, but physically abused children are almost always emotionally maltreated.

The following are examples of signs that **might** indicate a child is being emotionally maltreated:

- Each time he picks up nine-year-old Nathan, Mr. Wheeler makes fun of his son's efforts. Typical comments include: "Can't you button that coat right? You never get the buttons lined up with the holes. You look like an idiot." "What's that a picture of? It looks like a five-legged horse." "Can't you climb to the top of the ropes yet? All those other kids climbed to the top. What's the matter with you, are your legs too weak?" Mr. Wheeler told a staff member, "I like to give him a hard time. I don't want him to think he's better than anyone else. He needs to remember that he's got a lot to learn."
- The Jackson family has two children enrolled in the school-age program. Seven-year-old Neesie is a child who excels at everything—she's a great athlete, a talented artist and musician, and an excellent student. Nine-year-old Tiffany is a quiet child who tends to spend most of her time playing with a small group of friends. Her strength is her flexible and adaptable nature. She is able to get along with almost everyone. Usually, when Mrs. Jackson picks up the girls she ignores Tiffany and lavishes praise and attention on Neesie. Today she says, "Neesie, let me see what you made today. Did you get another 'A'?" "Where's Tiffany? Sitting in the corner again? Tell her we have to go." Mrs. Jackson tells a staff member, "I know Neesie's going to do well in life. And Tiffany—I hope she stays as cute and quiet as she is so she can catch a rich husband."

Signs of possible neglect tend to be present frequently.

Child neglect is characterized by a failure to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical (for example, refusal to seek health care when a child clearly needs medical attention), educational (for example, failure to enroll a child of mandatory school age), or emotional (for example, chronic or extreme spouse abuse in the child's presence). Neglect results in death as frequently as abuse. Neglectful families often appear to have many problems they are not able to handle.

When considering the possibility of neglect, it is important to look for consistencies. Do the signs of neglect occur rarely or frequently? Are they chronic (present almost every day), periodic (happening after weekends, vacations, or absences), or episodic (for example, seen twice during a period when the child's mother was in the hospital)?

Some examples of signs that **might** indicate a child is being neglected include the following:

- Sara falls down outside and badly scrapes her knee. A staff member cleans the knee with soap, puts on a bandage, and prepares an accident report for Sara's parents. Four days later, Sara complains her knee hurts. The staff member looks at her knee and notices the bandage has not been changed and the wound is becoming infected.
- Ten-year-old Andrea tells a staff member she missed school again yesterday because she was tired in the morning. She says, "My baby brother Max woke me up in the night. My mom wasn't home yet, so I made Max a bottle and gave it to him. Then he finally went back to sleep. This morning I slept so late I missed the bus." Andrea stays home from school at least once a week.

Recognizing Signs of Possible Child Abuse and Neglect Through Conversations and Interviews

School-age programs are generally family oriented, encouraging a great deal of formal and informal communication between staff and parents. You may gather important information about families from routine conversations with parents and children. During daily drop-off and pick-up times and at scheduled conferences, parents provide details of family life, discuss discipline methods, or ask for help with problems. Some children enjoy talking about their families, so they too may provide information about the family's interactions and home life.

Conversations with parents can provide clues to how the parent feels about the child. The presence of child abuse and neglect may be indicated if the parent constantly:

- blames or belittles the child ("I told you not to drop that. Why weren't you paying attention?")
- sees the child as very different from his or her siblings ("His older sister Terry never caused me these problems. She always did exactly what she was told to do.")
- sees the child as "bad," "evil," or a "monster" ("She really seems to be out to get me. She's just like her father, and he was really an evil man.")
- finds nothing good or attractive in the child ("Oh well, some kids are just a pain in the neck. You can see this one doesn't have much going for her.")
- seems unconcerned about the child ("She was probably just having a bad day. I really don't have time to talk today.")
- fails to keep appointments or refuses to discuss problems the child is having in the program ("That's what I pay you for—if she's getting into trouble, it's your job to make her behave.")
- misuses alcohol or other drugs.

Isolation and extreme stress can lead to child abuse and neglect.

When you know a family well, you are in a better position to gauge whether a problem may be a sign of possible child abuse and neglect or something else; a chronic condition or a temporary situation; a typical childhood problem that the program can readily handle or a problem that requires outside intervention. Family circumstances may also provide clues regarding the possible presence of abuse or neglect. The risk of abuse or neglect increases when families are isolated from friends, neighbors, and other family members, or if there is no apparent "lifeline" to which a family can turn in times of crisis. Marital, economic, emotional, or social crises are among the causes of family stress that can lead to child abuse or neglect.

Indicators of Abuse and Neglect in School-Age Programs

You may find it hard to imagine that child abuse and neglect could take place at a school-age program, but it happens. Thinking of this possibility may make you feel as though you are "spying" on your colleagues or that your supervisors will be "spying" on staff. It may help to remember that your primary responsibility is to keep children safe. One important way to do this is to be alert to the possibility of child abuse and neglect taking place right at the program site.

Much of the information provided already applies to both familial and institutional child abuse and neglect. There are, however, some specific signs that may indicate child abuse or neglect in a school-age setting. Here are some examples:

There are some specific signs of possible child abuse or neglect in a school-age setting.

- A child refuses to participate in activities supervised by a particular staff member.
- A child shows extreme fear of a staff member.
- A staff member notices that a colleague spends long periods of time out of sight with one child.
- A staff member takes unscheduled breaks without telling his or her colleagues.
- A staff member talks about children very negatively, saying a child is "bad," "spoiled," or "needs to be taught some respect."
- A staff member hears screams or cries coming from a room used by the program.
- A child states that he or she has been hurt by a staff member.
- A staff member shows favoritism to one child and gives that child special attention and treats. The staff member holds the child excessively, although the child appears uncomfortable and tries to get away.

If you see any of these signs, investigate immediately and report your suspicions to your director.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this activity you answer several questions about defining and recognizing child abuse and neglect. If you can't answer a question, review the information provided in this learning activity, then try again. An answer sheet is provided at the end of the module.

Defining and Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

1. A parent refuses to get medical care for a child who will die without treatment. Is this considered abuse?

2. What are the four types of child abuse and neglect?

3. What are "acts and omissions"? Give an example of child abuse or neglect that is the result of an act and an example that is the result of an omission.

4. Does sexual maltreatment always include physical contact between an offender and child?

5. Why is it difficult to identify emotional maltreatment?

6. Why are school-age staff in an excellent position to identify signs of possible child abuse and neglect?

Review the answer sheet at the end of this module. Discuss this learning activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity V.

Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify state and local requirements for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect; and
- overcome emotional and other barriers to reporting.

School-age staff must follow established reporting requirements.

If you suspect or have reason to believe a child may have been abused or neglected, you are ethically and legally required to report that information so action can be taken to help the child and the family. In most states, school-age staff are, by law, required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. In addition, you have a professional responsibility to know and understand the reporting requirements of your state, local government, and program. You must also follow established procedures for filing a report.

State laws specify where to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Each state law specifies one (or more) agencies to receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. Usually reports are made to the Department of Social Services, the Department of Human Resources, the Division of Family and Children's Services, or Child Protective Services of the local city, county, or state government. In some states the police department may also receive reports of child maltreatment. It is important to know who receives reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in your jurisdiction. The state reporting statute includes this information.

Some states require that either a written or an oral report be made to the responsible agency. In other states an oral report is required immediately, and a written report must follow in 24 to 48 hours. You will need to check your state law for the specific requirements.

Most states require reporters to provide the following information:

- the child's name, age, and address;
- the child's present location (for example, at the school-age program);
- the parent's name and address;
- the nature and extent of the injury or condition observed; and

- the reporter's name and location (sometimes not required but very useful for the agency conducting the investigation).

Many programs have established policies defining the duties and responsibilities of all staff in reporting child abuse and neglect. If you don't have a copy of your program's child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, ask your director for one. Use it to complete the following chart.

State and Local Policy on Child Abuse and Neglect

I report suspected child abuse and neglect to:

____

At the following phone number: ______________________________

I must give the following information:

____

____

____

I also must follow these state and local reporting requirements:

____

____

____

____

My report must be:

☐ **Oral**

☐ **Written**

☐ **Both**

Overcoming Barriers to Reporting

When you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, you may feel very reluctant to report your suspicions. It helps to remember that a report of child maltreatment is not an accusation; rather, it is a request to begin the helping process. But the reporting process does not always go smoothly. You may encounter difficulties that will discourage you from making future reports. If you are aware of these difficulties beforehand and plan ways to overcome them, you will be better able to fulfill your legal and ethical responsibilities.

You do not have to prove your suspicions.

Some staff find their personal feelings are a barrier to reporting child abuse or neglect. They simply prefer not to get involved. They are afraid they have made a mistake and convince themselves that there is a perfectly good explanation for the child's injuries or behavior. They may fear other staff or parents will think them incompetent or an alarmist. It is important to remember that while adults wait for positive proof of a child's maltreatment, the child is vulnerable to continued maltreatment.

Your primary responsibility is to protect children.

Another potential barrier to reporting is the special relationship parents and a staff member (or two staff members) might develop over months or years, which may hinder a person from reporting suspected cases of child maltreatment. At times, when staff observe signs of abuse or neglect, they may give parents or colleagues the benefit of the doubt. Even when they do suspect child maltreatment, they may fear that confronting the parent or colleague will result in a hostile, indignant, or distressed reaction or retaliation. It may help to remember that as a professional, your primary responsibilities are to protect children and to support their families. By reporting your suspicions to the appropriate authorities, you are actively protecting children. In addition, you are helping their families (or your colleague) get the assistance they need to change their behavior.

Getting Ready to Report

Once you suspect a child is being maltreated, **you must waste no time in reporting**. Taking this action will probably make you feel at risk, confused, and generally uncomfortable. It is not a pleasant task. To alleviate some of your discomfort, you can use the following checklist to prepare for the report. (Note: some items may not be applicable to your situation.)

	Done
1. Document your suspicions and review your observation notes and anecdotal records.	☐
2. Analyze your information to identify the things that cause you to suspect abuse or neglect. Make a list of the physical and behavioral signs you have observed.	☐
3. Describe the parent (or staff member) and child interactions you observed. Note instances when the parent indicated he or she finds the child difficult, worthless, or impossible to handle. Include examples of the parent's lack of interest in the child.	☐
4. Discuss with your colleagues the physical and behavioral signs you have documented. If they have reason to suspect abuse or neglect, discuss their reasons.	☐
5. Ask your supervisor what support he or she will provide once you file the report and what the program will do if the parent tries to remove the child.	☐
6. Set up a support system for yourself. (After making the report, you may feel vulnerable and need to talk with others about your feelings and concerns, without breaching confidentiality.)	☐
7. Review the program's reporting policy.	☐
8. Collect the information needed to file the initial report.	☐
9. Obtain the exact telephone number and address of the agency to which you should report.	☐
10. If a written report is required, obtain the reporting forms or use a piece of paper.	☐
11. File your report.	☐
12. Notify the parents that you have filed a report.	☐

This checklist can help you organize your thoughts and secure the support you will need once the report is filed. You might not be able to wait until you have completed all the items on this checklist. In some cases, you may have to report your suspicions immediately.

Offer support to the child and family.

You will note that the last step on this checklist is to notify the child's parents that you have filed a report. In most cases this will be a difficult conversation. You want to be supportive, while carrying out your primary responsibility—to keep the child safe. Try to maintain a professional tone. Let the parents know **what** you reported ("repeated incidences of cigarette burns on Carl's arm"), **when** the report was filed ("this morning"), and **to whom** ("Child Protective Services"). Explain that you have carried out your legal, professional, and ethical responsibilities to file a report of suspected child abuse and neglect and are not involved in "proving" that abuse or neglect took place. In addition, let parents know that you want to offer the family support as they deal with this difficult situation. They may not respond to your offer immediately, however, it is important to let them know that you are not passing judgment on anyone's behavior. Instead, you have reported signs of possible abuse so their child and the family can get the help they need.

After Filing the Report

In some states and local jurisdictions, CPS is so overwhelmed by reports of child abuse and neglect that staff cannot respond to every case. There may be internal policies that require the agency to respond first to cases that are life-threatening or extremely clear-cut. You may see no response to a report you have filed. If this happens, remember it is extremely important for the school-age program to continue supporting the child and family and advocating for them to receive needed services. In addition, you should continue to be alert to physical and behavioral signs of abuse or neglect. If necessary, file a second, or even third report. Some states have hotline numbers set up for filing reports. Find out if there is one in your state, and use it if necessary.

Applying Your Knowledge

This learning activity will help you understand your responsibilities for reporting child abuse and neglect. Answer the questions, then respond to the case study that follows. Answers are provided at the end of the module. There can be more than one good answer to each question.

School-Age Staff Responsibilities for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

1. Why do child maltreatment laws exist?

2. How do maltreated children get assistance?

3. What happens to children if nobody reports child maltreatment?

4. Under what circumstances do I have to file a report?

5. What will happen to me if I don't report?

6. What if I'm wrong and the parents sue me?

Case Study

Ms. Benson and Ms. Altman have worked together in the school-age program for several months. They get along well and have become friends outside work. Today Ms. Benson is assigned to supervise the children playing outside. Ms. Altman is supervising children who have chosen to stay inside. Ms. Altman looks outside and sees nine-year-old Teresa come running towards the building. Then Ms. Benson comes running after Teresa. When Ms. Benson catches up with Teresa she grabs her by both arms and turns the child around. Still holding Teresa by both arms, Ms. Benson shakes Teresa and appears to be shouting at her. Teresa struggles to get free, then runs into the building. When she reaches Ms. Altman, she shouts through her tears, "I hate her. I'm going to tell my mother she squeezed my arms." Ms. Altman sees Teresa's arms are very red. She says, "I'm sure there must be a misunderstanding. Ms. Benson probably didn't realize she was hurting you." Teresa responds, "How can you take her side? I saw you watching. I know you saw what she was doing."

What should Ms. Altman do, and why?

Compare your response to the one at the end of the module, and discuss it with your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for helping children stay healthy. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Promoting Good Health and Nutrition

Maintaining Indoor and Outdoor Environments That Promote Wellness and Reduce the Spread of Disease

1. **What are three things Ms. Nunes did to maintain a healthy environment?**

   a. She opened the windows a few inches to let in fresh air. Because it was a cool day, she didn't open them all the way.

   b. She checked the paper towel and soap supply and made a note to ask one of the children to put out more paper towels.

   c. She conducted a health check on the children.

2. **What did Ms. Nunes do to keep germs from spreading?**

   a. She reminded a child to use a tissue and then wash his hands.

   b. She washed her hands and made sure Lacey washed hers after vomiting.

Encouraging Children to Develop Habits That Promote Good Hygiene and Nutrition

1. **How did Mr. Berry help the children develop healthy habits?**

   a. He reminded them to wash their hands.

   b. He washed his own hands.

   c. He shared the recipe for one of his favorite snacks.

2. **How did Mr. Berry teach the children about good nutrition?**

   a. He helped them see how much fat was in a hamburger.

   b. He suggested they look for recipes that are low in fat, salt, and sugar.

   c. He planned a healthy snack for their first cooking project.

1. **What are the clues to possible child abuse in this situation?**
   a. Carolyn has been spending more time alone than usual.
   b. Carolyn has been short-tempered with the younger children.
   c. Carolyn says she hates her brother and that he made her do something bad.
   d. Carolyn tells Ms. Charles her brother made her touch him.

2. **How did Ms. Lee support Ms. Charles?**
   a. Ms. Lee tells Ms. Charles she's glad she came to her.
   b. She encourages Ms. Charles to discuss her concerns and to maintain confidentiality.
   c. She supports Ms. Charles' decision to file a report to Child Protective Services.

Defining and Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

1. **A parent refuses to get medical care for a child who will die without treatment. Is this considered child abuse or neglect?**

   Yes. This is failing to provide health care, a form of neglect.

2. **What are the four types of child abuse and neglect?**

   Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or maltreatment, and neglect.

3. **What are "acts and omissions"? Give an example of child abuse or neglect that is the result of an act and an example that is the result of an omission.**

   Acts refers to what a parent or other caretaker does that is child abuse or neglect; for example, burning a child's arm. Omissions refers to what the person does not do; for example, failing to provide appropriate supervision.

4. **Does sexual maltreatment always include physical contact between an offender and child?**

   No. The definition of sexual maltreatment includes exploitation, which might include forcing a child to look at pornography or the offender's genitals, or could include photographing a child for use in pornographic publications.

5. **Why is it difficult to identify emotional maltreatment?**

   The signs are rarely physical and some effects do not show up for years. Also, the behaviors of emotionally maltreated and emotionally disturbed children are often similar.

6. **Why are school-age staff in an excellent position to identify signs of possible child abuse and neglect?**

   School-age staff see children every day. They might detect signs of possible child maltreatment that would otherwise go unnoticed.

School-age Staff Responsibilities for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

1. **Why do child maltreatment laws exist?**

   To provide protection for children who cannot protect themselves.

2. **How do maltreated children get assistance?**

   If a child is a victim of maltreatment, the only way the child and family will receive help is if a report is filed.

3. **What happens to children if nobody reports maltreatment?**

   If the maltreatment goes unnoticed and unreported, it is likely it will continue and perhaps escalate.

4. **Under what circumstances do I have to file a report?**

   If your knowledge of the child and his or her family and your professional training and experience lead you to suspect child maltreatment, then you must file a report.

5. **What will happen to me if I don't report?**

   If you fail to report, under your state's laws you might be subject to fines or even a jail sentence.

6. **What if I'm wrong and the parents sue me?**

   When you make a report in good faith, the law protects you. You cannot be sued for reporting child maltreatment because as a school-age staff member, you are mandated to do so.

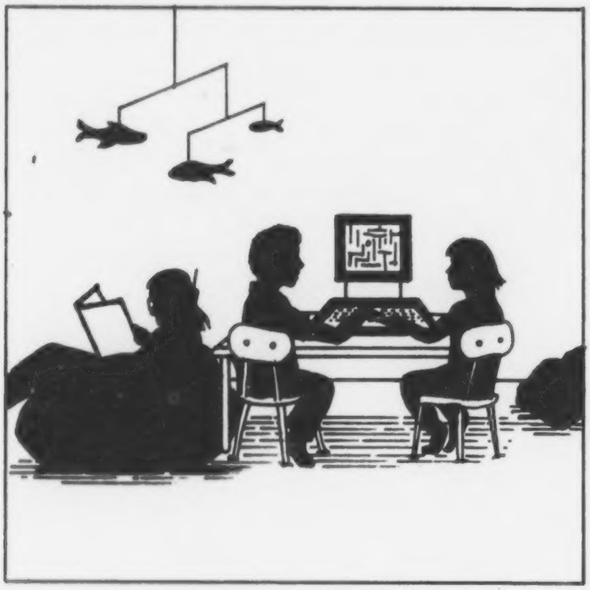
Case Study

What should Ms. Altman do, and why?

Ms. Altman needs to remember it is her job to protect children such as Teresa from harm. Some signs of physical abuse are evident. She witnessed a colleague using physical force to restrain a child, and she saw the results of the physical actions—red marks on Teresa's arms. It is not Ms. Altman's job to investigate or determine if her colleague's actions are poor practice or child abuse or neglect. Based on what she saw, it is her job to file a report of **suspected** abuse.

GLOSSARY

Body fluids	Liquids and semi-liquids eliminated by or present in the body, such as feces, urine, mucus, and saliva.
Diet	The kind and amount of food and drink regularly consumed.
Disinfectant	A cleaning solution that destroys the causes of infection.
Hygiene	Practices that preserve good health and eliminate disease-producing germs.
Infection	Invasion of the body by tiny organisms that cause disease.
Nutrient	A component of food that offers nourishment to the body.
Nutritious	Having large amounts of vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, or protein, and being low in fats, salt, and sugar.
Sodium	A mineral normally found in seafood, poultry, and some vegetables; one of the components of table salt.
Starch	A carbohydrate food such as cereal, potatoes, pasta, and bread.



Module 3:

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT

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OVERVIEW

CREATING AND USING THE SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT INVOLVES:

- organizing indoor and outdoor areas to support a variety of activities;
- selecting and arranging developmentally appropriate materials and equipment; and
- planning and implementing a schedule and routines to meet children's developmental and individual needs.

The school-age program environment includes the indoor and outdoor space you regularly use. Some, or all, of the environment may be used solely by your program, or it might be shared with other groups. For example, a program located in a school might have its own room, supplemented by regular access to the gymnasium, cafeteria, and playground.

The quality of the environment affects how children and staff feel.

The quality of the physical environment affects how children and staff feel. Features such as the size of the space, wall colors, the type of flooring, the amount of light, the acoustics, and the number of windows all influence the quality of the environment.

A good outdoor environment for school-age children has soft and hard surfaces and shady and sunny areas. There is an area for ball games, challenging equipment for large muscle development, space set aside for construction and digging, a storage area, and a place to read or play quiet games. Ideally, the outdoor play area is adjacent to a field for large group games and sports.

Effective environments complement the school day.

In school, children spend a large part of their day following directions, completing assignments, and developing skills in a relatively structured classroom setting. They are in a very real sense "on the job" during the school day. The most appropriate environments for school-age programs complement rather than duplicate the school day. They allow children to unwind, relax, be themselves, and socialize with peers and adults. They also support children's special projects and encourage involvement in the community beyond home and school. Activities and materials allow children to develop special talents and master new skills. A good program environment would support Renaldo's interest in building a geodesic dome, allow Tiffany to learn more about her community's recycling efforts, and give Amy a chance to master her woodworking skills.

School-age children can help plan and organize the environment.

It's important to allow children to feel a sense of ownership of their environment. Include them as you plan, organize, set up, or rearrange your space. Their suggestions may surprise you. Although some materials and equipment are already in place, the children will have ideas about additional items they would like to have at the program. If the environment is planned and organized in cooperation with the children, they are likely to take more responsibility for taking care of it, and your job will be easier.

Your program's schedule and routines also contribute to creating a comfortable atmosphere. Each day will probably go more smoothly if the schedule and routines meet the diverse needs of the children enrolled in the program.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in creating and using program environments.

Organizing Indoor and Outdoor Areas to Support a Variety of Activities

Establish a variety of well-defined and equipped indoor and outdoor interest areas that reflect children's skills and interests.

Rotate interest areas or create sub-areas to respond to children's changing skills and interests.

Create soft, cozy areas where children can play alone, read books and magazines, do homework, listen to music, daydream, or talk with a friend.

Provide sufficient space and appropriate equipment for group games and sports, indoors and outdoors.

Define separate spaces indoors and outdoors for active and quiet play so children don't get in the way of each other.

Provide sufficient storage for children's personal belongings—for example, labeled lockers, cubbies, and shelving units.

Arrange the outdoor area to support a variety of activities such as group games, painting at easels, eating snack, and reading under a shady tree.

Help older children create special places that are reserved for their use only.

Involve children when arranging and rearranging the space used by the program.

Locate interest areas near the resources, such as light and water, that are used in the area.

Designate storage space for long-term projects and works-in-progress.

Adapt the environment, if necessary, to accommodate children with special needs.

Selecting and Arranging Developmentally Appropriate Materials and Equipment

Select materials such as board games, puzzles, and manipulatives of varying degrees of difficulty to accommodate a wide range of skill levels.

Follow up on field trips, school, and community activities by providing related materials at the program. (For example, after a field trip to a nature center, display nature books, magazines, posters, and collections in the science and nature area.)

Offer open-ended materials (for example, collage supplies) and equipment (such as playground balls) children can use in different ways.

Use low, open shelves and storage units so children can easily select and replace materials.

Store special projects and items to be used with supervision on tall shelves and lockable storage units.

Provide materials such as puppets, dramatic play props, posters, books, and magazines that present or reflect different ethnic backgrounds, diverse roles for men and women, and people with disabilities.

Store materials and supplies that are used together, near each other.

Provide a variety of materials and equipment that can be used by children with a wide range of abilities.

Find out what children would like to have at the program through observations, conversations, surveys, and listening to their interactions with each other.

Planning and Implementing a Schedule and Routines to Meet Children's Developmental and Individual Needs

Allow children to meet their personal needs (using the bathroom, eating snack, resting/relaxing) on individual schedules.

Provide things to do during transitions (for example, leaving for school) so children do not have to stand in line or wait with nothing to do.

Plan a schedule that includes large blocks of time when children choose what they want to do.

Provide sufficient time in the schedule for children to carry out their plans and engage in long-term projects.

Offer a balance of activity choices including active and quiet; indoors and outdoors; and individual, small group, and large group.

Schedule time for rests or naps for children who come to the program after morning kindergarten.

Include sufficient time for clean-up at the end of the morning, afternoon, and full-day sessions.

Creating and Using a Program Environment

In the following situations school-age staff are creating and using program environments. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Organizing Indoor and Outdoor Areas to Support a Variety of Activities

Mr. Johnson watches the children on the playground. Several older girls are sitting under a tree randomly drawing lines in the dirt with sticks. Jason, Bobby, and Derrick are running around in circles teasing each other. They nearly knock down several roller skaters, disrupt a ball game, and get in the way of two children painting at easels. Some younger children are trying to play volleyball, but they can't get the ball over the net and it keeps rolling down the hill. The rest of the children are at the storage shed looking for something to do. They pull out some jump ropes tangled up with skates and sandbox toys. "This place needs some organizing," Mr. Johnson thinks.

Over the next week, Mr. Johnson and the children reorganize the storage shed. They hang up the jump ropes where they can be reached easily, and put the skates and sandbox toys in separate boxes. Next they make three activity boxes: one with colored chalk for sidewalk drawing, another with trowels and magnifying glasses to examine insects and plants, and a third with small games such as jacks and cards. Mr. Johnson and the children also discuss how to use the areas of the playground and how to help each other. Several older children offer to hold a "sports clinic" to help the younger ones learn to play volleyball. Jason, Bobby, and Derrick ask to set aside an area for running relay races.

1. How did Mr. Johnson know the outdoor environment was not working?

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2. How did Mr. Johnson and the children work together to improve the outdoor area?

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Selecting and Arranging Developmentally Appropriate Materials and Equipment

Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Sullivan are discussing special projects the children could explore over the next month. They have noticed that even though it's January, many children have been talking about summer vacations and how they wish they could go to the beach—right now! At the next group meeting they present some ideas for learning more about ocean life; painting large murals of underwater life—to create an underwater atmosphere; adding paper maché materials to the arts and crafts area to make large underwater creatures—such as an octopus or a starfish; turning the drama area into a sunken ship, complete with a broken mast, a crow's nest, and a treasure chest. The children respond enthusiastically and offer some of their own ideas. Nancy suggests they learn some sailing songs. Daniel says he will ask his mother, who is a marine biologist, to visit the program and talk about life under the sea. Terrence asks, "What happened to the aquarium we had last year?" Mr. Sullivan replies, "It's in the closet. We could use some of our supply budget to set it up again. Would you like to be in charge?" "Sure," says Terrence. "I'll help him," joins in Jack.

To involve families, Ms. Rodriguez puts a notice in the newsletter asking for donations of old jewelry and coins for the treasure chest. She arranges for Daniel's mother to speak to the group and gathers books and magazines on sea life for the quiet area. Mr. Sullivan is a scuba diver so he brings in his gear and explains how it works. For the science and nature area, children bring in items they've collected on beach trips—shells, shark's teeth, driftwood. Over the next two weeks the children and staff become totally immersed in their study of ocean life.

1. What did Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Sullivan know about the children?

2. How will the planned activities and new materials help children learn?

Planning and Implementing a Schedule and Routines to Meet the Developmental and Individual Needs of Children

As she sees the first bus pull up, Ms. Chan thinks about how lately roll call and snack are taking longer than ever. The children can't seem to quiet down, and she has to shout over the noise to be heard. Some of the children have wrestling matches while waiting for snack, and others complain they're not hungry and just want to go outside.

At the next planning meeting Ms. Chan shares her observations with her colleagues. They decide to adjust the schedule to create a more comfortable, relaxed atmosphere that will be in tune with children's needs. First they decide it really isn't necessary to call the roll aloud. Instead, Mr. Trent will stand near the door, greeting and checking off the children as they arrive. Three activities will be available to the children during the first 30 minutes of the program: (1) going outside with Ms. Chan to unwind after the school day; (2) going to a self-service area where snacks will be set out in advance; and (3) gathering in the quiet area to relax and talk with friends, play a short game, read a magazine, or listen to music on headphones. Staff will remind children who don't eat snack right away to serve themselves 15 minutes before the area closes. After children have settled in during the first 30 minutes, Ms. Chan and the other staff will gather everyone for brief announcements about activity options for the rest of the afternoon.

1. **How do the changes planned by Ms. Chan and her colleagues reflect the needs of children after school?**

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2. **In what ways might the new approach reduce the amount of noise and tension in the program?**

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

How Your Environment Affects You

All people are affected by their environments.

We are all affected by our environments. Whether sitting in the living room, shopping in a store, climbing a mountain, or lying on the beach, we react to where we are. Our surroundings affect:

- how we feel;
- how comfortable we are;
- how we behave; and
- how effectively we can accomplish what we need to do.

Think for a moment about how you feel and behave in the following situations:

- Standing in a hot, crowded bus or subway where you are sandwiched among strangers. (Perhaps you pull in your shoulders, try to avoid any contact with others, and count the minutes until you get off.)
- Eating in a special restaurant with a favorite friend. The lights are low, and the noise level is muffled. The food smells delicious, and attractive pictures hang on the walls. (You are probably relaxed, enjoying a delightful dinner, feeling special and unhurried.)
- Preparing a meal in a strange kitchen when the owner is not there to help you. (You can't figure out how the kitchen is organized and you spend lots of time looking for the things you need. It's inefficient, and you may not cook as well as you usually do.)

Sometimes we don't know how the environment affects us.

It's easy to see in these examples how environments can affect our actions and our feelings. But the influence of our surroundings isn't always so clear. Sometimes we aren't aware of how the environment is making us feel and act.

To identify some less obvious factors in the environment that can support you or work against you, take time to answer the following questions. Think about a store where you enjoy shopping. It can be a grocery store, clothing store, hardware store, or any other store. As you imagine yourself there, think of what makes it a good experience. What makes it easy to find and purchase the things you need?

Then think about a store you dislike. When you are there, you feel frustrated and angry. You may decide never to return again. What's different about this store?

Type of store: ______________________________

Why do you *enjoy* shopping there?

Type of store: ______________________________

Why do you *dislike* shopping there?

Look over your answers to these two questions. Many of the factors you identified that make shopping enjoyable or difficult apply to your work environment as well. Your work environment should be organized and planned to support your goals for children and to make your job easier and more enjoyable.

Now think of your favorite place to be; it can be indoors or outdoors. Close your eyes for a moment and imagine yourself in that space. How does it feel? smell? look? What do you hear? What are you doing? Are you alone, or are other people with you? Describe your favorite place below.

Favorite Place:

Often when people describe their favorite place, they identify features such as the following:

- a quiet place to be alone;
- a place where only the sounds of nature can be heard;
- a soft and comfortable place to stretch out;
- a place where music is playing;
- a place where the air smells fresh and clean;
- a bright and sunny place; or
- a colorful and attractive place.

Keep the features of your favorite space in mind as you examine your work environment. An environment that is comfortable for both you and the school-age children will make your job more satisfying.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to create and use program environments. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Organizing Indoor and Outdoor Areas to Support a Variety of Activities	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Establishing a variety of well-equipped indoor and outdoor interest areas that reflect children's skills and interests.	☐	☐	☐
2. Rotating interest areas or creating sub-areas to respond to children's changing skills and interests.	☐	☐	☐
3. Creating soft, cozy areas where children can play alone, read, listen to music, daydream, or talk with a friend.	☐	☐	☐
4. Providing sufficient space and appropriate equipment for group games and sports, indoors and outdoors.	☐	☐	☐
5. Defining separate spaces, indoors and outdoors, for active and quiet play so children do not get in the way of each other.	☐	☐	☐
6. Providing sufficient space for children to safely store their belongings.	☐	☐	☐
7. Arranging the outdoor area to support a variety of activities.	☐	☐	☐
8. Helping older children create special places that are reserved for their use only.	☐	☐	☐
9. Involving children when arranging and rearranging space used by the program.	☐	☐	☐

Organizing Indoor and Outdoor Areas to Support a Variety of Activities
(continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Locating interest areas near resources, such as light and water, that are used in the area.	☐	☐	☐
11. Designating storage space for long-term projects and works-in-progress.	☐	☐	☐
12. Adapting the environment, if necessary, to accommodate children with special needs.	☐	☐	☐

Selecting and Arranging Developmentally Appropriate Materials and Equipment

13. Selecting materials such as board games, puzzles, and manipulatives of varying degrees of difficulty to accommodate a wide range of skill levels.	☐	☐	☐
14. Following up on field trips, school, and community activities by providing related materials at the program.	☐	☐	☐
15. Offering open-ended materials and equipment children can use in different ways.	☐	☐	☐
16. Using low, open shelves and storage units so children can easily select and replace materials.	☐	☐	☐
17. Storing special projects and items to be used with supervision on tall shelves or in lockable storage units.	☐	☐	☐
18. Providing materials such as puppets, drama props, posters, books, and magazines that present or reflect different ethnic backgrounds, diverse roles for men and women, and people with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐
19. Observing, talking with, listening to, and surveying children to find out what materials and equipment they would like to have in the program.	☐	☐	☐

Planning and Implementing a Schedule and Routines to Meet Children's Developmental and Individual Needs

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
20. Allowing children to meet their personal needs (for example, toileting, eating, and resting or relaxing) on individual schedules.	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing things to do during transitions (for example, leaving for school) so children do not have to stand in line or wait with nothing to do.	☐	☐	☐
22. Planning a schedule that includes large blocks of time when children can choose what they want to do.	☐	☐	☐
23. Providing sufficient time in the schedule for children to carry out their plans and engage in long-term projects.	☐	☐	☐
24. Offering a balance of activity choices including active and quiet; indoor and outdoor; and individual, small group, and large group.	☐	☐	☐
25. Scheduling time for children to rest or nap after their morning kindergarten session.	☐	☐	☐
26. Including sufficient time for clean-up at the end of morning, afternoon, and full-day sessions.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 3, Program Environment.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.

Understanding How Children Use the Environment

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical behaviors of school-age children; and
- apply what you know about children to creating and using a program environment.

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children Are Like

No longer preschoolers, 5- to 7-year-old children begin to develop a sense of themselves as "big kids." They want to make friends and play with others. Their emerging sense of themselves includes an awareness of what it means to be a "boy" or a "girl."

Children in this age group generally prefer cooperative rather than competitive games and sports. They like teamwork and following rules. They enjoy making up new games—complete with rules—and inventing new rules for familiar games.

Climbing, running, skipping, and hopping are favorite physical activities, along with tumbling and simple ball games. Children may tire easily during physical activities, so it is a good idea to have a place for them to rest or cool down.

Younger school-age children enjoy "hands-on" activities, but may not have the fine motor coordination needed to hold and manipulate small tools and materials. They enjoy the process of making things, but also are interested in the tangible products of their efforts. Simple arts and crafts projects and a wide variety of open-ended materials help them develop their fine motor skills and feel good about their accomplishments.

With rapidly expanding vocabularies, 5- to 7-year-olds are learning to express their interests, thoughts, and feelings. They enjoy reading and being read to (by staff or older children), and use their thinking skills to solve puzzles and problems. They use their active imaginations in dramatic play, music, dancing, and art.

The youngest children in this age group are just beginning to shift their interests from a world centered around the family to one that includes school, friends, and community. Playing with familiar household materials in the dramatic play area may be very appealing. This age group also enjoys more complex dramatic play that helps them explore and make sense of the larger world.

Most 5- to 7-year-olds can take care of their personal needs independently. They use the bathroom, eat meals, wash hands, and make a wide range of decisions without adult assistance.

How do 5- to 7-year-old children use the environment?

Below are some examples of 5- to 7-year-old children using a program environment.

- Brenda and Tran are using the wok and chopsticks in the house corner to cook and serve dinner.
- Janet and Cindy are outside under a tree with a box of puppets. Janet's puppet says to Cindy's, "It feels terrible when someone makes fun of you."
- Carla and Betty stand in the back row during aerobics so they can copy what the bigger kids are doing.
- Tommy and Bobby jump from the bus and run inside to put away their backpacks. Tommy hurries outside to play on the climber. Bobby stops first to get a snack from the self-service counter.
- Maria, a kindergartner, is pleased to see her older friend Monica arrive at 3 p.m. The two girls choose a beginning reader from the quiet area and curl up in the beanbag chair. Monica reads Maria a story.
- Patty is working on her favorite jigsaw puzzle—which she can do very quickly. Ms. Jacobs says, "You are so good at doing that puzzle. Would you like to try one with more pieces?"
- Galen and Marshall are building a large block structure. Some older children run by, making the blocks fall down. They complain to Ms. Dobson, who suggests they bring up their problem at the group meeting. "Yeah," says Marshall, "maybe we can move the block corner to a safer place."

Observe how the 5- to 7-year-olds in your program use the environment, and list some examples below.

Based on your observations, what changes would you like to make in the environment to address the needs of 5- to 7-year-olds?

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children Are Like

During the middle elementary years, most children are cooperative and enjoy group activities that focus on a common interest—for example, sports, clubs, drama, music, or gymnastics. They may be interested in contests and other competitive activities that allow them to be "good at something." Younger children in this age group tend to prefer being with their own gender. The older ones begin to show interest in the opposite sex, although they are probably too embarrassed to admit it.

As cognitive abilities increase, children stretch their creativity—writing stories and plays, acting, inventing and designing things, and making up jokes and riddles. They can use their math and thinking skills in fresh, entertaining ways. Their thinking skills also help them negotiate with others, solve problems, and exercise good judgment. They use words to express their anger and other feelings. Children begin to set standards for their own behavior and learn greater self-control.

The increased body strength and coordination of most 8- to 10-year old children is used in organized sports and games and individual physical activities. They are developing a sense of rhythm and balance and like to move and dance to music. Sometimes they create their own dance steps and routines.

Fine motor control also is increasing, so children enjoy activities and projects that require manual dexterity and control. Crocheting, playing musical instruments, doing macramé, performing magic tricks, using hand looms, and playing computer games are among the many activities these children find appealing.

Children in this age group tend to feel grown up and like to experiment and try out new ideas and activities. Their growing confidence may lead them to take risks and try things they are not ready for. Increased physical and mental skills allow them to do complex tasks, follow detailed directions, and play complicated games of strategy without adult assistance. They may enjoy the challenge of playing games such as chess and backgammon, following directions to build models, and using a special recipe to make a new snack.

With their growing attention spans, 8- to 10-year-olds like long-term projects and activities: organizing, categorizing, and displaying a shell collection; weaving a wall hanging; or mastering a physical skill such as turning a cartwheel. They may pursue special interests for days, weeks, or even months.

How do 8- to 10-year-old children use the environment?

Below are some examples of 8- to 10-year-old children using a program environment.

- Ronald and Dirk are members of a community soccer league. They run up and down the field, practicing their dribbling and passing skills.
- Sam and Laura find a garden snake on the playground. They come inside to see if they can find its picture in one of the nature books.
- Jodie, Mark, and Eddie are telling each other jokes and rolling on the floor laughing. Ms. Donahue shows them some joke and riddle books. The three "comedians" decide to put on a comedy show in the large-group activity area.
- Judy and Eli are arguing about whose turn it is to use the computer. Judy says, "I know what we can do. Let's ask Ms. Kelly to think of a number from 1 to 5. Whoever guesses closest to her number can have the first turn." Eli agrees, and they both go to ask for Ms. Kelly's help.
- Dani is at the homework table studying for her spelling test. She asks Molly, an 11-year-old, to give her a "practice test."
- Doreen, Eric, and Damian are playing a new board game. When they get to a point where nobody knows what to do, Eric reads the instructions out loud.

Observe how the 8- to 10-year-olds in your program use the environment, and list some examples below.

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Based on your observations, what changes would you like to make in the environment to address the needs of 8- to 10-year-olds?

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What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children Are Like

In general, older school-age children can focus on challenging tasks for long periods of time. Hobbies and interests begun during these years may develop into lifelong pursuits. Children's increased attention spans are accompanied by the development of abstract thinking skills. They can think about the future, make plans, reflect on the past, and grapple with events happening outside their immediate community. They are thirsty for information as they try to see how they relate to the rest of the world. As their awareness and thinking capacities grow, they may worry about situations reported in the news and need opportunities to express their concerns and feelings. They can empathize with others and may want to get involved in community projects such as helping the homeless, establishing a recycling center, or visiting the elderly. Older children also enjoy creative activities that help them shape and express their feelings and ideas.

Many 11- and 12-year-olds are entering or already in early adolescence—the period of most rapid physical growth since infancy. As a result, they need lots of opportunities to exercise. Sports such as basketball, tennis, and gymnastics allow children to develop complex coordination skills, for example, running and dribbling at the same time. Older children may take risks as they test the limits of their physical skills. They may feel they are invincible—accidents happen to other people, not to them. They need equipment that is sturdy enough for larger bodies and more vigorous play. Outdoors, the climbing equipment, swings, and slides designed for younger children may not be strong enough for use by older children. Indoors, programs should provide tables, chairs, and other furniture large enough to accommodate older children.

Peer groups provide the arena for this age group to test their opinions and practice social skills. This process allows them to develop relationships with the opposite sex and with others in the community. There is a strong desire to be accepted by peers, who may be a positive or negative influence. It's common for these children to imitate teenagers and the adult world as they "try on" what it's like to be grown up. Fads in dress, music, and language are common. Although 11- and 12-year-olds are struggling to gain autonomy, they seek out adults who can provide guidance, encouragement, and support without making them feel like "little kids."

How do 11- to 12-year-old children use the environment?

Below are some examples of 11- to 12-year-old children using a program environment.

- Lisa is sitting at the homework table writing a letter to a friend she met at overnight camp.
- Natalie is making a display for her poetry. First she uses a calligraphy pen to copy her poems. Then she uses an X-acto knife to mat the copies on heavy board.
- George and Aseem set up the volleyball net on the far end of the field. They are teaching some younger children how to serve.
- Melinda and JoWanda are leading a "Double Dutch" jump rope contest outside on the blacktop.
- Ben, Kelly, and Marcia are sorting clothes and toys the program collected for a homeless shelter. Later in the week several children will help to deliver the items.
- Nicky and Meredith are using poster board, fabric scraps, and other collage materials to design a new line of kids' fashions.
- Wayne and Haki are signing out to go to a mime class offered by a local acting company. The school-age staff coordinated with the children's families so the boys could take advantage of this community resource.

Observe how the 11- to 12-year-olds in your program use the environment, and list some examples below.

Based on your observations, what changes would you like to make in the environment to address the needs of 11- to 12-year-olds?

Discuss with your trainer and your colleagues what changes you should make in your environment to make sure it addresses the needs of children of different ages.

Learning Activity II.

Creating an Indoor Environment

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- plan and set up interest areas in the indoor environment; and
- create an environment in shared space.

Establishing Interest Areas

Many school-age programs divide their environments into interest areas—clearly defined spaces with materials and equipment focused on a theme or type of activity. This is done for several reasons. It structures the environment so children can choose their own activities. It also gives them the freedom to work and play alone or with a small group of friends. Well-organized and inviting interest areas allow children to engage in activities with little help or assistance. This frees staff to support and encourage children who do need attention and assistance.

Popular interest areas are available every day.

Regardless of the size or shape of your program's environment, you can set up interest areas. In a large room the areas can be relatively permanent, defined by architectural features and furniture. In smaller rooms, some areas may remain in place throughout the year, while others are created by using rolling carts, baskets, or boxes to store and display materials. Even programs that share space and must set up and take down each day can create interest areas. Suggestions for creating an environment in shared space are discussed later in this learning activity.

In deciding which interest areas to create in your program, consider the number, ages, and interests of the children enrolled; size and characteristics of your space; and requirements related to sharing space. Some interest areas, such as the arts and crafts area, are so popular they should be available every day. Others, such as a collections area, can be established in response to children's interests and left up until children have moved on to other endeavors. Sub-areas can also address special interests. For example, a basket of materials and books on tie-dying could be a sub-area within the arts and crafts area.

Some popular interest areas are described below. Discuss with your colleagues which ones are priorities for your program.

The **Board and Table Games Area** includes board and card games, puzzles, word games, crossword puzzles, and other small games. There are tables and chairs and protected space on the floor for playing games. Materials for inventing and making new games and puzzles are stored on a shelf or in a box or basket. Board and table games allow children to develop the skills needed to work and play cooperatively with others. Most younger children enjoy simple games that are played for 20 to 30 minutes. These games can be rotated every few weeks to give children new options. Older children prefer more complex games that take a long time to play. They may play challenging games such as chess and backgammon daily, over a long period of time, gradually mastering the skills involved.

The **Quiet Area** is located near a good source of light for doing homework and reading. It is an inviting, comfortable, restful place where children can read, relax, do homework, play paper-and-pencil and blackboard games, use a computer, listen quietly to music or recorded stories, or talk with a friend. This area is stocked with materials such as paper, pens, pencils, erasers, index cards, rulers, computer programs, and a wide variety of books and magazines.

The **Large-Group Activity Area** is located away from quiet activities with lots of space for children to move freely. This flexible area is used for gross motor activities, meetings, play rehearsals, dancing, and performances. (Clubs may meet here or in other areas, such as science and nature, math, or arts and crafts). Some programs have access to a gymnasium or separate room for these activities. Because a variety of activities take place here, there is ample storage for props and costumes, club supplies, musical instruments, and CD and tape players.

The **Blocks and Construction Area** is located in a well-protected space, out of the line of traffic. Shelves define the area and a flat carpet provides a smooth surface for building. Ideally, structures can be saved from one day to the next. Blocks of different sizes and types (e.g., unit blocks and Legos), construction materials (e.g., Lincoln logs), and props (e.g., small cars and trucks) are stored on open shelves. Block building encourages children to think, play, and solve problems. They learn about sizes and shapes and how to cooperate as they plan and carry out their ideas. Unit blocks help children grasp basic mathematical concepts. Some children build complex structures and play with them for several days. A sub-area can provide materials for creating huts, hideaways, caves, and tents children can use in dramatic play.

The **House Corner** is defined by shelves and furniture. It is equipped with props and materials that encourage imaginative play. Because the family is so important to them, younger children especially enjoy a house corner filled with familiar objects. If your program doesn't have many younger children, or if the children begin to outgrow or tire of this kind of play, you can dismantle the area or create a dramatic play area with a broader range of props and costumes.

The **Long-Term Project and Hobby Area** is located in a protected place with shelves and tables for storing and displaying children's ongoing projects. This area is a must if older children are enrolled in your program. They have the skills and attention spans to carry out projects over a long period of time.

The **Dramatic Play Area** is stocked with prop boxes that encourage play around a specific theme such as a travel agency, veterinarian's office, or a television station. (See Module 9, Social, for a discussion on prop boxes.) This area might focus on a specific theme for several weeks. Older children especially enjoy developing a total environment around a theme of their choice. For example, they might create a mini-mall with different shops "selling" things made by the children. Other children could purchase items with pretend money.

The **Arts and Crafts Area** is located near the sink and has a washable (rather than carpeted) floor. It includes easels and a table and chairs. Basic art supplies such as paper, glue, scissors, paint, and markers are within easy reach on a nearby shelf. Children use art materials to express ideas and feelings and to explore their creativity. Craft projects help develop small muscle coordination. Sub-areas (rotated if space is limited) encourage children to explore modeling and carving, sculpting, collage making, weaving and stitchery, printing, and batik and tie-dye.

The **Sand and Water Area** adds softness and sensory experiences to the environment. Younger children especially enjoy this area; sand and water are very calming materials. Located near the sink and away from carpeting, it includes a sand and water table and a variety of props children use to explore the properties of these natural materials. You don't need more than two inches of sand or water to make this a great activity. If space is limited or shared, or if only a few younger children are enrolled, you can use a small, light table on wheels.

The **Science and Nature Area** is located near windows and the sink. It is a place to set up experiments, observe and learn about animals, and display collections and special items, such as a snake's molted skin or an abandoned hornet's nest. If space allows, this area can include basic materials and supplies for exploring science (for example, tools and items for measuring, weighing, magnifying, examining, and taking apart). Every few weeks, new materials, equipment, and experiments can be introduced to keep interests alive. The area allows children to investigate and think about nature and the environment and encourages them to become involved in community projects. Older children may become engrossed in long-term projects for many weeks. Sub-areas might include: natural science, physical science, and club projects such as inventions, pet care, or how things work.

Some interest areas can be rotated.

If space is limited, you can establish interest areas such as the following on a rotating basis.

The **Woodworking Area** includes a workbench set up outdoors or indoors, with a variety of simple tools, safety equipment, wood scraps, and books of suggested projects. It is located near other noisy activity areas and is constantly supervised when in use. This area provides hands-on, practical learning opportunities.

The **Music Area** includes instruments, music books, CD and tape players, and CDs and tapes representing a wide range of musical styles, including music from different cultures. When space is limited, equipment and supplies can be stored in a closet or wheeled shelving unit and used in the large-group activity area. This area encourages children to use their imaginations as they explore and express their feelings through singing, dancing, listening to, and creating music. Music activities also help children develop small and large muscle coordination.

The **Math Area** includes graph and plain paper, pencils, measuring tools, calculators, small blocks, and Cuisenaire rods for children to use in problem solving. It provides many opportunities to test thinking capacities. To minimize distractions and interruptions, it is helpful to locate this area near other quiet activities. The math area can be a useful resource for children in the blocks and construction and science and nature areas.

The **Collection Area** provides a safe space where children can categorize, store, and display items related to their special interests. As children become more independent, collections are an excellent way for them to work on their own projects. A Collections Club can accommodate a wide range of interests. The club might have rotating monthly exhibits—Tony's rocks this month and Regan's toys from foreign lands next month. If you don't have room for a separate collection area, you can have sub-areas in other interest areas (for example, arts and crafts or science and nature).

Try these suggestions for arranging interest areas.

The next step is deciding where to set up your interest areas. Careful placement of your interest areas will make it possible for children to work and play without disturbing each other.

- Separate quiet areas (such as arts and crafts and board and table games) from noisier ones (such as blocks and construction and dramatic play).
- Store materials that are used together near each other—collage materials near glue and paper, reference books and writing supplies in the quiet area, small vehicles with the blocks.
- Define the boundaries of each area using shelves, furniture, different floor coverings, and room dividers. In shared space, children can help to define interest areas each day by laying out carpet squares, using masking tape to mark boundaries, or setting up large blocks or cardboard building materials.
- Locate areas near the resources children need to carry out their plans. For example, place the science and nature area near light and water so children can conduct experiments such as growing plants or hanging prisms that make rainbows.
- Set up the quiet area where there is a good source of light for writing, using the computer, and reading.

Suggested materials for each interest area are provided in the next learning activity.

Creating an Environment in Shared Space

Your program may be housed in shared space such as a multipurpose room, gymnasium, cafeteria, or recreation center, or you may share your space with another part-day child development program. Even if the space is used for other purposes before and after program hours, your environment should make children feel as if it's designed for them while they're using it.

As discussed earlier, programs held in shared space can include a variety of interest areas. Begin by viewing interest areas as well-organized, portable modules or kits that can be set up quickly and stored easily. It will not be feasible to set up every interest area each day; however, you can develop a number of modules or kits to combine in different ways to keep the program varied and stimulating. Try to also put out materials that give the program a homelike, relaxed feeling (for example, beanbag chairs or cushions, small rugs, or carpet squares).

Sharing space will influence your choice of supplies, equipment, and room arrangement. Before you make these choices take time to gather information about your space and other parts of the facility used by the program. Answering the following questions will help you learn more about your shared space.[1]

- What is the size and shape of the space? Where in the building is it located? Do you have access to other areas? If so, where are they located?
- What other groups use the space? When?
- How can the different groups using the space have **regular** and **direct** communication with each other?
- Can some program equipment remain permanently set up, or must everything be dismantled daily?
- What storage area is available? How large is it? How close is it to the space where most program activities take place?
- What furniture and supplies are already in the space? Are any of these "off limits" to the school-age program?

Take time to identify the best equipment, furniture, and supplies for shared space.

Most programs that share space need to create and dismantle the environment each day. Include ample time in your schedule for staff and children to complete this process. Certain types of furniture and equipment can be set up, taken down, moved around, and stored with relative ease in a short amount of time. The following list of equipment, furniture, and supplies will help you plan an appropriate environment in shared space. For each item listed, there is a description of why it is suitable for shared space and how it might be used. All of the items are available commercially; however, a volunteer with carpentry skills could make low-cost versions of some of them.

Before making final decisions about what furniture and equipment best suit your program's needs, review your answers to the planning questions listed earlier. Keep in mind your goal is to select items that will help you create a rich and varied program for the children.

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[1] Adapted with permission from Roberta Newman, *Presto Environments in Shared Space, Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals* (Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Public Schools Television Foundation, Inc., 1993), pp. 98–107.

Equipment, Furniture, and Supplies for Shared Space

Basic Equipment and Furniture

Item	Description	Suggested Uses
Tables	Sturdy and light: -rectangular (3' x 6' or 3' x 8') -round -fold-out type -wooden with wheels	Play games, do homework, work on crafts Eat meals and snack Display projects Use audiovisual and other equipment Store materials underneath (camouflage with cloth) Create a staff administrative area
Chairs	Stack on a wheeled base Folding	Define areas for relaxation and work Store coats, books, and personal belongings Sit down
Shelves	No more than two to four shelves per unit (higher units limit visibility and may be unsafe): -wooden with pegboard, on wheels -open-up cabinet type	Create borders to define and contain supplies for interest areas Divide the room (cover backs with attractive, sturdy material) Store staff supplies (face open shelves to wall or cover with a curtain)
Cabinets	With built-in or attached locks: -wooden on wheels -metal on rolling base	Store supplies Divide the room Create displays (front or back)
Cubbies	Wooden units on wheels with sections (most have 10 to 30 sections) large enough for coats and books	Screen, hide, or protect storage areas Divide the room Create displays (on the back) Hang coats and store belongings
Roll carts	Metal on wheels with two to three shelves	Transport equipment and supplies from storage to rooms Set up moveable interest areas Store heavy equipment such as stereos
Storage bins	Cardboard, plastic, or wooden crates with tops for easy storage/stacking Labeled to store related items together	Store materials for interest areas Store supplies Transport supplies

Equipment and Supplies to Make the Space Attractive and Comfortable

Item	Description	Suggested Uses
Bean bag chair, large pillows, or mattress	Light versions that hold one to two children, are sturdy, comfortable, durable, and washable Single-size mattress with attractive, sturdy, washable cover	Create a home-like, comfortable environment Add softness to the room Encourage children to socialize, listen to music, and play quiet games
Area Rugs*	Low pile with pads underneath Large enough for a few children to sit on, but small enough to carry to and from storage areas if necessary	Create softness and warmth Encourage children to use the space Create an area for relaxing Cut down noise levels
Curtains*	Shower curtains or fabric hung from a dowel rod attached to the ceiling or window, or hung between large pieces of portable furniture	Create a soft feeling Define boundaries in the room
Styrofoam sheets	Light insulation sheeting in 2' x 3', 3' x 5', or 4' x 6' sizes	Create bulletin boards (use push pins to hang items) Screen storage areas Create more private areas
Tri-Wall cardboard	Sheets of thick, sturdy, corrugated cardboard	Create room dividers (designed, built, and decorated by the children) Make clubhouses or private nooks (again, created by the children) Build constructions Create bulletin boards (use push pins to hang items)
Blocks	Large, hollow cardboard or wooden blocks	Create private areas Define interest areas

*Check your local fire regulations to make sure these items are permitted in your space.

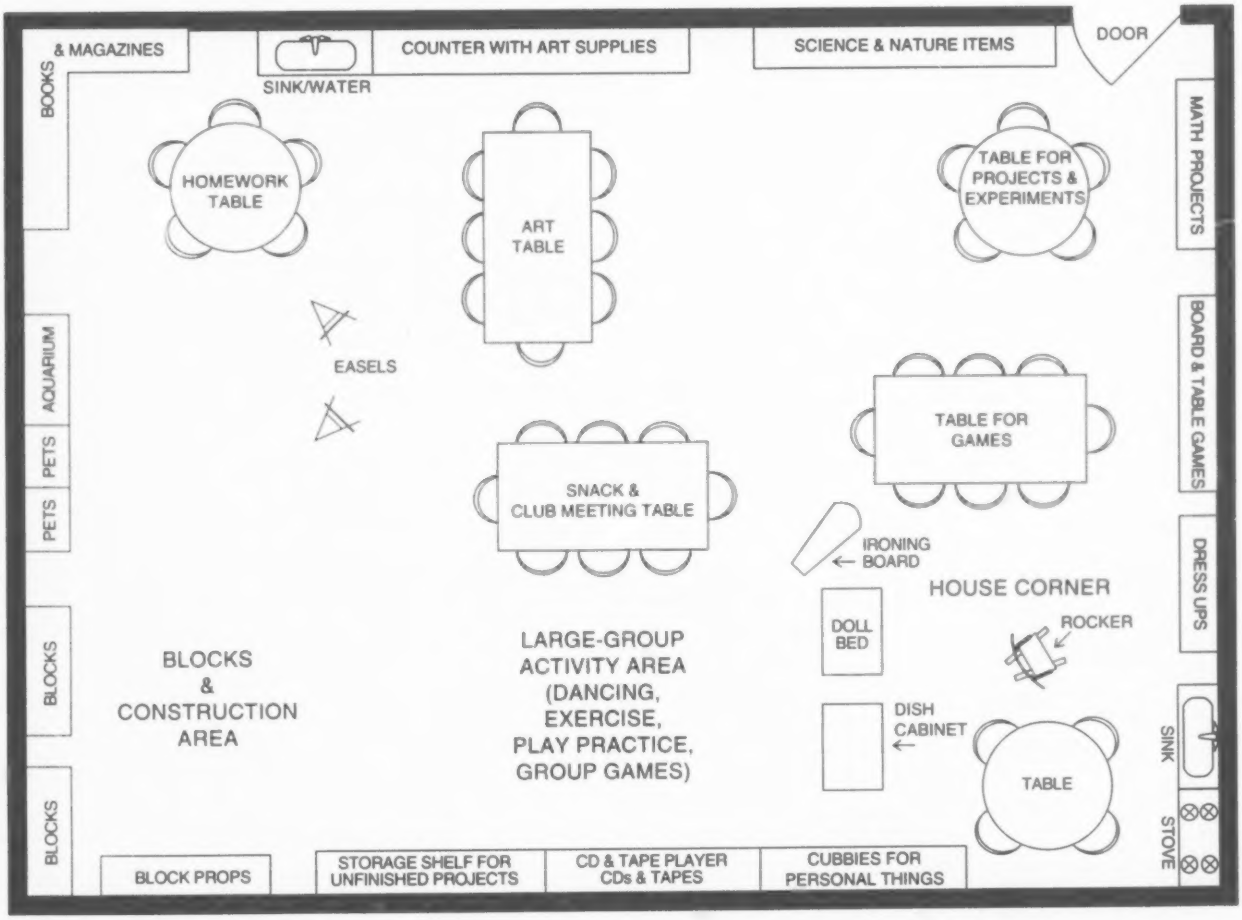
Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you will review two different room arrangements for school-age programs and identify the strengths and weaknesses of each. Then draw a plan of your own indoor space and decide on what changes you want to make to improve the environment.

Room Arrangements

Using the guidelines for arranging indoor space, identify the strengths and weaknesses of Floor Plan A.

Floor Plan A

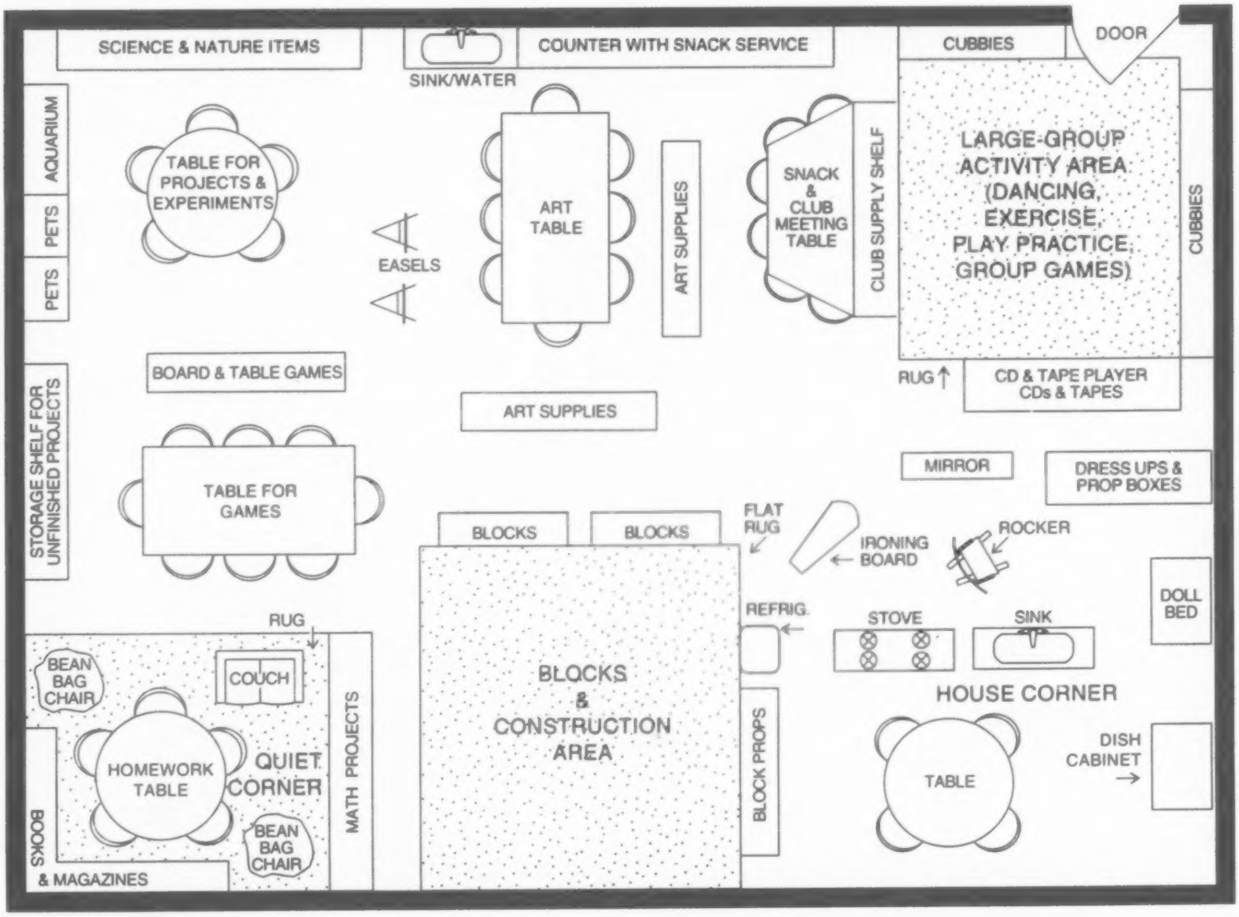

BOOKS & MAGAZINES
SINK/WATER
COUNTER WITH ART SUPPLIES
SCIENCE & NATURE ITEMS
DOOR
HOMEWORK TABLE
ART TABLE
TABLE FOR PROJECTS & EXPERIMENTS
MATH PROJECTS
AQUARIUM
PETS
PETS
EASELS
BOARD & TABLE GAMES
TABLE FOR GAMES
SNACK & CLUB MEETING TABLE
IRONING BOARD
HOUSE CORNER
DRESS UPS
DOLL BED
ROCKER
BLOCKS
BLOCKS & CONSTRUCTION AREA
LARGE-GROUP ACTIVITY AREA (DANCING, EXERCISE, PLAY PRACTICE, GROUP GAMES)
DISH CABINET
TABLE
SINK
STOVE
BLOCKS
BLOCK PROPS
STORAGE SHELF FOR UNFINISHED PROJECTS
CD & TAPE PLAYER CDs & TAPES
CUBBIES FOR PERSONAL THINGS

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Now look at Floor Plan B, which shows the same room rearranged. What is different? In what ways is this arrangement better?

Floor Plan B


SCIENCE & NATURE ITEMS
SINK/WATER
COUNTER WITH SNACK SERVICE
CUBBIES
DOOR
AQUARIUM
PETS
PETS
TABLE FOR PROJECTS & EXPERIMENTS
EASELS
ART TABLE
ART SUPPLIES
SNACK & CLUB MEETING TABLE
CLUB SUPPLY SHELF
LARGE-GROUP ACTIVITY AREA (DANCING, EXERCISE, PLAY PRACTICE, GROUP GAMES)
CUBBIES
BOARD & TABLE GAMES
ART SUPPLIES
RUG
CD & TAPE PLAYER CDs & TAPES
STORAGE SHELF FOR UNFINISHED PROJECTS
TABLE FOR GAMES
MIRROR
DRESS UPS & PROP BOXES
BLOCKS
BLOCKS
FLAT RUG
IRONING BOARD
ROCKER
RUG
REFRIG.
STOVE
SINK
DOLL BED
BEAN BAG CHAIR
COUCH
MATH PROJECTS
BLOCKS & CONSTRUCTION AREA
HOUSE CORNER
HOMEWORK TABLE
QUIET CORNER
BLOCK PROPS
TABLE
DISH CABINET
BOOKS & MAGAZINES
BEAN BAG CHAIR

Differences in Floor Plan B:

How is Plan B better?

Compare your answers to those on the answer sheet at the end of this module.

Use the space below to draw a plan of your indoor space as it is now. Include all areas that are available to you, even if you cannot use them every day. Also include fixed items, especially if you share space and cannot rearrange these items. Use additional paper if necessary.

Current Floor Plan

On the basis of what you've learned, what changes do you want to make?

____

____

____

____

____

What special challenges would you face in making these changes?

____

____

____

____

____

Now, redo your plan, showing how you want to rearrange your space. Even in shared space, the basic principles of arranging interest areas apply. Whatever special challenges your space offers, try to think of ways to set up and arrange the space to accommodate children's interests and needs.

Before your final version, you may want to experiment with different arrangements. An easy way to do this is to use graph paper marked with the dimensions of your space (for example, one square = one square foot) and its special features (for example, windows, electrical outlets, sink, and closets). Then, using the same scale, cut out small pieces for furniture and equipment. This allows you to move the pieces around on the paper to find the best possible arrangement for your space. This will save a lot of time in the long run, because you won't have to actually move large pieces of equipment to find out whether they will fit in the space you intended. Working with scale models will also help you decide where to place equipment such as CD players or aquariums that need electrical outlets.

Revised Floor Plan

Discuss your revised floor plan with your trainer and colleagues who use the same space. Decide what changes you will make.

Learning Activity III.

Using the Outdoor Environment

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- organize the outdoor environment by interest areas; and
- determine what materials and equipment are needed to improve your program's outdoor environment.

The school-age program may provide children with their only opportunities to be outdoors.

Whether your program operates in a school immediately adjacent to playgrounds and ball fields, a recreation center located next to a neighborhood park, or an apartment complex surrounded by parking lots, children should be allowed to play outdoors. For some children, it may be their only chance to get fresh air, stretch their muscles, and explore the outdoor world. Some schools have a very short recess or none at all. By the time children get home from the program, it may be too late and too dark to play outdoors. Weekends may be filled with family activities. And, in some neighborhoods, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and criminal activities are so prevalent, there are no outdoor areas where children can play safely.

The most effective outdoor environments for school-age children support a wide range of activities. There is a large area for ball games, equipment for climbing and other large muscle activities, and space for construction and digging activities. There is also room to set up activities typically done indoors. For example, children can play board games, eat snack, model with clay or playdough, or listen to music outdoors.

Does your outdoor environment include these features?

If at all possible, the outdoor environment should include the following:

- easy access to and from the indoor space used by the program;
- a drinking fountain and water spigot for attaching a hose;
- nearby bathrooms;
- a storage shed outdoors or indoors, near the door to the outdoor area;
- soft materials such as sawdust, sand, or bark under swings, slides, and climbers;
- a paved or hard-surfaced area for riding, skating, chalk drawings, and games;

- a covered area for use in wet weather;
- sunny areas;
- shady areas;
- places to be alone or with one or two friends (boxes, tents, logs, bushes);
- open, grassy spaces for tumbling, running, and sitting; and
- ball fields for active or group play.

Outdoor interest areas allow for many different kinds of play.

Like the indoor environment, the outdoor space used by school-age programs can be organized by interest areas that provide a variety of materials and activities. Active play areas are located near each other and separated from the quiet ones. There are clear pathways and enough space between areas to avoid crowding and accidents. Equipment and materials used in the interest areas are kept in a storage shed or brought outdoors from the indoor space. Examples of outdoor interest areas include the following:

- Large Muscle (the playground equipment includes swings, slides, and climbers)
- Science and Nature (activity kits are kept in the storage shed and used to explore the plant and animal life present in the outdoor space)
- Woodworking (a bench is set up in an area away from active games and sports, tools are kept in the storage shed)
- Gardening (a vegetable garden is in a sunny spot near the building, tools and a hose are kept in the storage shed, an outside spigot provides water)
- Sports and Active Games (there is a large field and an outdoor basketball court; balls, equipment, and rule books are kept in the storage shed)
- Construction (saw horses, boxes, planks, tires, and boards are located on the grassy area next to the playground equipment)
- Sand Play (a covered sandbox is next to the playground equipment, digging tools and a variety of props are kept in the storage shed)
- Reading and Quiet Games (a picnic table with two benches sits under a shady tree, away from the noise and hubbub, books come from indoors, cards and small games are kept in the storage shed)

- Riding and Skating (a section of the paved surface is marked with safety cones, bikes, skates, and safety gear are kept in the storage shed)
- Jumping Rope (a section of the paved surface is marked with safety cones; ropes and books of jump rope jingles are kept in the storage shed)
- Arts and Crafts (easels, paper, paints, and brushes are carried from indoors to a designated area of the blacktop; tote boxes filled with craft supplies are kept in the storage shed; there is a picnic table with benches)
- Water Play (the water table and props are carried from indoors to an area of the blacktop near the water spigot; on hot days a sprinkler is set up on the grass)
- Club Meetings (several sizes of cable spools from the telephone company are set up on the grass under a tree; materials are kept in the storage shed brought from indoors)

An ideal school-age program environment allows children to move between the indoor and outdoor areas, participating in activities of their own choosing. The schedule doesn't include a set time to go outdoors, because the outdoor area is always staffed and available for children's use. If your outdoor area is not immediately adjacent to the building, your program schedule may have a set time, when interested children, accompanied by assigned staff, go outdoors and choose from a variety of activities or plan and carry out their own. You will want to encourage all children to spend some time outdoors; however, they should be allowed to stay indoors if that is their choice for the day.

Children and staff need to dress for the weather.

Some children (and staff) don't like to go outdoors because they think it is too cold or too hot. They prefer to stay indoors where the temperature is at a constant level. Children and staff will feel more comfortable outdoors if they are dressed appropriately for the weather. On cold days this includes dressing in layers (long sleeve shirt, sweater, and coat), and wearing a hat and gloves or mittens. On warm days, dress in loose clothing, made from light fabrics, and perhaps wear a hat with a visor. You can keep on hand a box of extra clothes—loose t-shirts, shorts, and baseball caps in the summer; and scarves, hats, gloves, and sweaters in the winter. Remember, you are a model for the children in the program. If you dress appropriately and enjoy spending time outdoors, children are more likely to follow your lead.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you and a small group of children (2 to 3) use a checklist to take an inventory of the materials and equipment your program provides for the outdoor environment. When you come to items on the checklist that your program doesn't have, ask the children if they think you should add them to your inventory. There is also space to suggest additional items you and the children think would enhance everyone's enjoyment of the outdoor environment.

When you have completed the checklist, invite the children to meet with you, your colleagues, and the director to pass on your recommendations for improving the outdoor environment.

Materials and Equipment Checklist for the Outdoor Environment*

Date: ____________________

Children: ____________________

Physical Activities

- ☐ Bats
- ☐ Balance beam
- ☐ Hoops
- ☐ Swings
- ☐ Roller skates
- ☐ Ice and/or roller skates
- ☐ Yo-yos
- ☐ Street hockey sticks and pucks
- ☐ Wagons and carts
- ☐ Tumbling mats
- ☐ Balls (playground and specific sports)
- ☐ Tunnels
- ☐ Knotted rope
- ☐ Seesaws
- ☐ Safety helmets and pads (for skating, bike riding, and street hockey)
- ☐ Safety cones to designate areas for riding, skating, or playing hockey
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Ring toss sets
- ☐ Jump ropes
- ☐ Slides
- ☐ Punching bag
- ☐ Badminton and volleyball equipment
- ☐ Pogo sticks
- ☐ Batons
- ☐ Portable goal net
- ☐ Horse shoes
- ☐ Chalk (for hopscotch)
- ☐ Air pumps for balls
- ☐ Tennis rackets and balls
- ☐ Barrels
- ☐ Platforms
- ☐ Long ropes for "Double Dutch"
- ☐ Pump (to reinflate balls)
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Construction

- ☐ Large cartons and crates
- ☐ Large blocks
- ☐ Fabric, wood, or cardboard for "roofing"
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Large spools
- ☐ Saw horses
- ☐ Boards to extend structures and build ramps
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

This list does not include items brought from the indoor interest areas.

Water play

☐ Hoses
☐ Pails
☐ Shallow pans
☐ Squeeze bottles
☐ Cups
☐ Sponges and brushes
☐ Soap
☐ Dolls and doll clothes
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

☐ Short lengths of rubber hose
☐ Measuring cups
☐ Corks
☐ Plastic bottles
☐ Funnels
☐ Egg beaters
☐ Tea kettle
☐ Sprinkler tops
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

Sand play

☐ Milk cartons
☐ Plastic bottles
☐ Gelatin molds
☐ Cookie cutters
☐ Spoons
☐ Dishes
☐ Small blocks
☐ Ladles
☐ Screens
☐ Coffee pots
☐ Human figures
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

☐ Plastic food containers
☐ Nest of painted cans
☐ Muffin tins
☐ Pans
☐ Cups
☐ Watering cans
☐ Sieves
☐ Pitchers
☐ Sifters
☐ Sugar scoops
☐ Animal figures
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

Hot-weather

☐ Hoses
☐ Buckets
☐ ____________________

☐ Pools (must meet safety requirements)
☐ Sprinklers
☐ ____________________

Snow

☐ Shovels
☐ Mallets for breaking ice
☐ Forms for making snow bricks
☐ ____________________

☐ Snow saucers
☐ Sleds
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

Discuss the completed checklist with the children who helped you. Schedule a meeting with your colleagues and director so you and the children can pass on your recommendations for improving the outdoor environment.

Learning Activity IV.
Selecting Materials

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- select materials that are developmentally and culturally appropriate; and
- determine what materials to add to your program's interest areas.

Selecting the right materials for each interest area depends partly on what items are available in your program. Established programs may already have a supply of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment. However, as children's skills and interests are constantly changing, the materials in each area must be regularly updated to provide new challenges and build on current "passions."

Many good materials for school-age children can be recycled from home and community businesses. For example, recycled items might include dress-up clothes; dramatic play props; fabric scraps, yarn, buttons, and wallpaper and paint samples for the arts and crafts area; collections for the science table; and back issues of sports, hobby, and other magazines for the quiet area. Also, excellent materials and games can be made—by staff, by volunteer parents, and by the children.

In selecting materials for your program, consider the following questions:

Consider the following when selecting materials.

Will it interest the children? Your daily observations of the children will help you identify special interests. Ask them what they like to do and pick up cues from their conversations with each other. You might also invite children to take turns helping to plan the activities for the next week or month or include a weekly evaluation and planning discussion in a group meeting. Children who can write might use a suggestion box to let you know their ideas for new materials and activities.

Do the children have the skills to handle the material? For example, does 7-year-old Sara have the coordination needed to use a crochet hook or serve a volleyball? Does 9-year-old Derek have the thinking skills to do crossword puzzles or play chess and other complex games of strategy?

Will it challenge children to think and explore? For example, weaving with natural items—grasses, feathers, twigs and other items found in nature—may be more interesting than using yarn and other commercial supplies. While working with these materials, children may also explore how people in different countries and cultures use natural materials for both practical and decorative purposes.

Does the material reflect the children's ethnicity, show people with disabilities engaged in meaningful tasks, or allow both boys and girls to see themselves in nonstereotyped roles? For example, books and magazines, puppets, and posters should reflect the diversity of our society and help children value and respect these differences. The arts and crafts area should have varied colors of paints, papers, crayons, and markers so children can easily paint and draw people with different skin tones.

Is the item durable and in good condition? This means it has no broken parts or missing pieces and will stand up to heavy use by many children. Materials should be clean and free of splinters or any jagged edges.

Does it help achieve your goals for children? For example, will it help children develop creativity? Practice independence? Learn to solve problems? Use language skills? Explore a special interest? Express humor? Develop small and large muscle control? Connect children with the community?

Although you can answer the last question now, you may want to review and expand your answer after you have completed Modules 4 through 10. These modules include many ideas for selecting materials that promote children's creativity and physical, cognitive, social, and language development.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you use a checklist to identify the materials and equipment in your program's interest areas. There is space to suggest additional items you think would enhance the areas.

Materials Checklist for Indoor Interest Areas

House Corner

Equipment and Furniture

☐ Stove
☐ Dish cabinet
☐ Highchair
☐ Ironing board
☐ Small table and three to four chairs
☐ Place to hang dress-up clothes
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

☐ Sink
☐ Refrigerator
☐ Rocking chair
☐ Mirror—full-length
☐ Bed for small doll
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

Props and Materials

☐ Dishes
☐ Standard pots and pans
☐ Silverware
☐ Cooking utensils
☐ Apron (for man or woman)
☐ Pot holders
☐ Plastic flowers
☐ Tablecloth or mats
☐ Items that reflect diverse cultures
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

☐ Telephones (at least two)
☐ Jewelry
☐ Suitcases and purses
☐ Hats
☐ Shoes
☐ Dress-up clothes (male and female)
☐ Plastic fruits, vegetables, and foods
☐ Empty food containers
☐ Dolls (reflecting children's ethnic backgrounds) and doll clothes
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

Dramatic Play Area

☐ Costumes
☐ Books of simple plays
☐ Miscellaneous props for plays
☐ Prop boxes related to specific themes (e.g., travel agent, magic show, auto mechanic, fitness club)
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

☐ Puppets
☐ Materials for making more puppets
☐ Clothes, shoes, scarves, hats, gloves
☐ Props related to history and geography (e.g., Alaska, The Roaring Twenties, The Year 2010)
☐ ______________________________
☐ ______________________________

Board and Table Games Area

- ☐ Shelf for displaying games and puzzles
- ☐ Table with five to eight mid-sized chairs
- ☐ Table to save puzzles or games that take more than a day to complete
- ☐ Cardboard, tape, scissors, markers, and other items for making games and puzzles
- ☐ Puzzles of varying levels of complexity
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ Jacks and pick-up sticks
- ☐ Crossword puzzles and word games
- ☐ Playing cards (standard deck and specialized games for different ages)
- ☐ Board games of varying levels of difficulty, such as Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, Sorry, Connect Four, Monopoly, Scrabble, trivia games, chess, checkers, and backgammon
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______

Math Area

- ☐ Table or shelf for displays and games
- ☐ Pegs and pegboards
- ☐ Beads and laces
- ☐ Colored inch cube blocks
- ☐ Legos
- ☐ Geo set
- ☐ Calculators
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ Rulers, yardsticks, measuring tapes, and meter sticks
- ☐ Abacus
- ☐ Parquetry blocks
- ☐ Attribute blocks
- ☐ Cuisenaire rods
- ☐ Magnetic board and numbers
- ☐ Paper and pencils
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______

Blocks and Construction Area

- ☐ Storage shelves (preferably two)
- ☐ Complete set of unit blocks
- ☐ Lincoln logs
- ☐ Wood or rubber people and animals
- ☐ Large hollow blocks
- ☐ Sheets of cardboard or Tri-Wall board
- ☐ Crates, large boxes, or appliance cartons
- ☐ Sheets or large pieces of fabric for tents, caves, or clubhouses, and "roofing."
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ Small cars and trucks
- ☐ Small blocks (Legos, Bristle Blocks)
- ☐ Traffic signs
- ☐ Giant paper fasteners
- ☐ Tarps
- ☐ Boards
- ☐ Colored inch cube blocks
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______
- ☐ ______

Arts and Crafts Area

General

- ☐ Table with five to eight mid-sized chairs
- ☐ Storage shelves or cabinets
- ☐ Easel (two-sided)
- ☐ Paint holders
- ☐ Water-based paint in a range of colors
- ☐ Finger paint
- ☐ Water color sets
- ☐ Water-based markers
- ☐ Colored chalks
- ☐ Crayons in a wide variety of colors
- ☐ Long and short handled easel paintbrushes
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Rubber cement
- ☐ Stapler
- ☐ Playdough and utensils
- ☐ Collage items
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Paper cutter
- ☐ Easel paper
- ☐ Finger paint paper
- ☐ Drawing paper
- ☐ Butcher paper for murals
- ☐ Tissue paper
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Crepe paper
- ☐ Felt scraps
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Burlap
- ☐ Needles with large eyes and thick yarn
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Glitter
- ☐ Sponges for cleanup
- ☐ Oilcloth to protect table
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Drawing and Painting

- ☐ Acrylics
- ☐ Pastels
- ☐ Felt pens
- ☐ Calligraphy pens
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Chalks
- ☐ Charcoal
- ☐ Drawing pencils
- ☐ Colored inks
- ☐ ____________________

Modeling and Carving

- ☐ Oil-based clays
- ☐ Aluminum foil
- ☐ Soap stone
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Moist clays
- ☐ Soap flakes
- ☐ Plaster of Paris
- ☐ Wheat paste
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Sculpting

- ☐ Wire
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Pipe cleaners
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Wood scraps
- ☐ Metal scraps
- ☐ Styrofoam pieces
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Collages, Weaving, and Stitchery

- ☐ Yarns (knitting, rug, and weaving)
- ☐ Mesh backings
- ☐ Frames and hand looms
- ☐ Hooks (crocheting and rug making)
- ☐ Fabric scraps
- ☐ Stuffing (scraps or white polyester)
- ☐ Buttons
- ☐ Toothpicks
- ☐ Cotton balls
- ☐ Pods
- ☐ Weeds and grasses
- ☐ Mosses
- ☐ Shells
- ☐ Pine cones
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Papers
- ☐ Needles (knitting and sewing)
- ☐ Beads and beading needles
- ☐ Ribbons
- ☐ Felt
- ☐ Rickrack
- ☐ Leather and fur scraps
- ☐ Thread (sewing and embroidery)
- ☐ Hooks and eyes, snaps
- ☐ Seeds
- ☐ Twigs and branches
- ☐ Leaves and bark
- ☐ Feathers
- ☐ Acorns
- ☐ ____________________

Batik and Tie-Dye

- ☐ Dyes
- ☐ Basins
- ☐ String
- ☐ Drying rack
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Paraffin
- ☐ Dyeable fabric pieces (not polyester)
- ☐ Rubber bands
- ☐ Books with suggested designs
- ☐ ____________________

Quiet Area

- ☐ Soft carpeting
- ☐ Small table with three to five chairs
- ☐ Tape or CD player with headphones
- ☐ Tapes and CDs
- ☐ Writing supplies (paper, pens, pencils, erasers)
- ☐ Books (a variety of fiction and non-fiction that reflect children's abilities and interests and depict characters without using stereotypes)
- ☐ Current events board (maintained by children) for community, sports, and music news and scheduled events
- ☐ Several large pillows, beanbag chairs, or an easy chair
- ☐ Decorations (a plant, pictures, or posters)
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Dictionaries
- ☐ *Guinness Book of World Records*
- ☐ *World Almanac*
- ☐ Local newspaper
- ☐ Local, U. S., and world maps
- ☐ Globe or national and international atlases
- ☐ Computer and a variety of software (may also be in math, science, or large-group activity area, depending on how it's used)
- ☐ Magazine on topics of interest to children (e.g., sports, cars, music, pets, hiking, fitness, animals)
- ☐ Flannel board, puppets, and props for storytelling, role playing, and problem solving
- ☐ Display shelves for books and magazines (at least one that shows front covers)
- ☐ ____________________

Large-Group Activity Area

☐ Table with six to eight mid-sized chairs for holding club meetings
☐ Balance beam
☐ Loft with a ladder
☐ Song books
☐ Fancy dress-up clothes
☐ Hats
☐ Cardboard cartons or Tri-wall for building simple stage sets
☐ Storage space for supplies used on a rotating basis
☐ Tapes and CDs (popular, ethnic, classical, jazz, folk, and traditional children's songs and dancing games)
☐ ____________________
☐ Large flat rug to make dancing and other exercises more comfortable
☐ Large indoor climber
☐ Tumbling mats
☐ Books on cooperative indoor games
☐ Capes
☐ Dance costumes
☐ Beanbags, foam balls, and other items for indoor games
☐ Tape or CD player for dancing, singing, exercise, and drama
☐ Scarves, streamers, hula hoops, jump ropes, pom-poms, and other items for dancing and exercise
☐ ____________________

Sand and Water Area

☐ Sand/water table (small or large)
☐ Shelf or box for equipment
☐ Plastic squeeze bottles
☐ Plastic pitchers
☐ Plastic hoses
☐ Plastic tubing
☐ Plastic sifters and beach toys
☐ ____________________
☐ Basins to hold sand and water
☐ Waterproof aprons
☐ Funnels
☐ Plastic basters or eye droppers
☐ Plastic boats
☐ Plastic measuring cups
☐ Sponges and mops for cleanup
☐ ____________________

Science and Nature Area

General

☐ Table
☐ Hand lenses
☐ Containers (basins, jars, cans, cartons, trays)
☐ Rulers and yardsticks
☐ Balance scales
☐ Access to water
☐ Old clocks, radios, and machines
☐ Reference materials (books, magazines, charts, and posters) related to current projects and displays
☐ Mallets and tools for taking things apart and/or exploring their insides
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________
☐ Shelves
☐ Microscope and slides
☐ Notebooks and pencils
☐ Tape measures
☐ Egg and clock timers
☐ Hotplate or electric skillet
☐ Rocks, seeds, and nuts to take apart
☐ Tools (trowels, beaters, sieves, measuring cups, scissors, mixing utensils, pitchers, clippers, pumps)
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________
☐ ____________________

Natural Science

- ☐ Ant farm
- ☐ Terrarium with glass cover
- ☐ Insect nets and boxes
- ☐ Cages with removable bottoms for pets or visiting animals (if allowed)
- ☐ Pets and supplies for their care
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Aquarium
- ☐ Bird feeders
- ☐ Collection containers
- ☐ Plastic bags for viewing insects, sand, earth, and water
- ☐ Gardening containers, weeds, soil, and tools
- ☐ ____________________

Physical Science

- ☐ Pendulums
- ☐ Prisms and crystals
- ☐ Mirrors
- ☐ Thermometers (indoor and outdoor)
- ☐ Electric bells with wires and dry cells
- ☐ Basins
- ☐ Bubble pipes
- ☐ Gelatin
- ☐ Hose pieces
- ☐ Magnetic compass
- ☐ Bicycle pump
- ☐ Oil, colorings, and powders for water experiments
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Magnets and related objects
- ☐ Balloons
- ☐ Barometer
- ☐ Photography kit
- ☐ Basters
- ☐ Straws
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Astronomy kit
- ☐ Weather vane
- ☐ Tuning fork
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Woodworking Area

- ☐ Sturdy workbench
- ☐ Pegboard or shelf for storing tools
- ☐ T-square
- ☐ Saws
- ☐ Hand drill and bits
- ☐ Assorted screws and screw eyes
- ☐ Tri-wall sheets
- ☐ Sandpaper
- ☐ Screwdriver and screws
- ☐ Tongue depressors
- ☐ Books and/or kits with instructions for easy projects—bird houses or feeders, small boxes, musical instruments
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ Ruler
- ☐ Hammers
- ☐ Assorted nails
- ☐ Vise
- ☐ C-clamps
- ☐ Soft wood (pine and balsa)
- ☐ Dowel rods
- ☐ Wood glue
- ☐ Protective eye goggles
- ☐ Popsicle sticks
- ☐ Bottle caps, wooden wheels, leather scraps, fishing line (for making simple instruments)
- ☐ ____________________
- ☐ ____________________

Music Area

- ☐ CD or tape player
- ☐ Scarves and streamers
- ☐ Musical instruments (e.g., tambourines, claves, sticks, castanets, drums, autoharp, ukulele, guitar, electric keyboard), homemade or purchased
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ CDs or tapes
- ☐ Storage cabinet or shelves for resources
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ ______________________

Collections Area

This area may begin with displays prepared by the staff to get children interested in collecting. From then on, children can collect, research, and display items such as the following:[2]

- ☐ Autographs
- ☐ Bottle caps
- ☐ Coins
- ☐ Decals
- ☐ Flags
- ☐ Jokes
- ☐ License plates
- ☐ Magic tricks
- ☐ Matchbox cars
- ☐ Model cars, trains, planes, ships
- ☐ Patches
- ☐ Postcards
- ☐ Rocks
- ☐ Stamps
- ☐ Trading cards
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ Bird nests
- ☐ Buttons
- ☐ Comics
- ☐ Dolls
- ☐ Insects
- ☐ Kites
- ☐ Marbles
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Miniatures
- ☐ Music boxes
- ☐ Puppets
- ☐ Recordings
- ☐ Shells
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Travel souvenirs
- ☐ ______________________
- ☐ ______________________

Discuss your ideas with your colleagues and trainer. Decide what items you can add to your program's interest areas.

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[2] Adapted with permission from Judith Bender, Barbara Schuyler-Haas Elder, and Charles H. Flatter, *Half a Childhood: Time for School-Age Child Care* (Nashville, TN: School-Age NOTES, 1984).

Learning Activity V.
Managing the Day

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- plan routines and a daily schedule that meet children's needs;
- provide time and space for homework; and
- use a variety of strategies to handle transitions smoothly.

Your program schedule should reflect the children's needs and interests.

The daily schedule defines the events that happen each day at your program. It shows what events take place, in what order, and for how long. What is a good schedule for school-age children? No one schedule will work for all groups and all staff. Each program needs a schedule that reflects its unique circumstances. For example, if a program offers breakfast before school, it must be served early enough for children to eat, clean up, and get ready to go to school. It's also important to allow for flexibility—for example, a planned crafts activity could be postponed if children are eager to go sledding before the snow melts. In addition, the schedule should provide a balance between structure and free choice. Children gain a sense of security from knowing that on most days, events at the program take place in the same order and at the same time. However, because most children have spent the day in a structured school setting, it is also important to plan a schedule that provides many opportunities for children to make choices. The program schedule should allow children to decide what to do, where to do it, with whom to spend time, and what materials to use.

Should homework be included in the program schedule?

Most school-age children receive homework assignments—every day or several times a week. In the early primary grades, homework may be minimal; however, by the time children reach the upper elementary grades, homework assignments can be quite lengthy and, for some children, difficult and frustrating. The decision to offer time and space to do homework at the program raises several issues related to the needs of children and families.

Some school-age professionals believe that homework should not be a part of the daily schedule. They think that it is more important for the program to give children opportunities to engage in different kinds of activities than those they experience in school. Homework should be done at home, they feel, where parents can give children structure and support, keep track of their progress, and congratulate them for their accomplishments.

Other professionals have a different view. They believe that providing time and space for doing homework at the program is a way to support children and families. They believe in offering children a variety of choices—with homework being one of them.

In discussing this issue in your program, it is important to consider the needs of the children and families you serve. Some children do not have a quiet space at home for doing homework and there may be nobody in the family who can provide encouragement and assistance if needed. In addition, some parents come home from work exhausted. By the time they pick up their children from the program, cook dinner, put younger siblings to bed, and do other household chores, there is little time left to answer children's questions about an assignment. The school-age program can provide the structure and support children need to do their homework and succeed in school.

You may encounter some parents who want their children to work on their homework as soon as they arrive at the program and do nothing else until it is finished. They want their children to do well in school and think homework should always come first. In such cases, it is important to explain that most children need a break from academic work after school and benefit from participating in a variety of activities. Some children actually do a better job on their homework after expending energy and engaging in active play. It is best if you can work with the parents and the child to reach a compromise. Perhaps the child can play for an agreed upon length of time before beginning homework, work for a set period of time, or do the assignments for some subjects at the program and for other subjects at home.

Try these suggestions.

If your program does provide an opportunity to do homework, you might find the following suggestions helpful:

- Establish a place in the environment for doing homework. In many programs, the quiet area includes the space and materials children need to work on their assignments. Like any workplace, the area should be well-lit and well-stocked.
- Keep in mind that children have different learning styles. Some learn best through reading, some by listening, some need to be shown how to do something, some need hands-on experiences, and most need a combination of approaches.
- Encourage children to take a break every 15 or 30 minutes. Taking a break relieves stress and helps them do their best work.
- Respect children's individual approaches to doing homework. In her book *Mega Skills*, Dorothy Rich says, "I am more and more convinced that what works for one person does not

necessarily work for another. There are those who have to do it standing up, those who do it sitting down, those who need complete quiet, and those who do well studying with lots of background noise."[3]

- Maintain a positive attitude. This lets children know that you think it is important for them to do their homework, and do it well. Try to emphasize quality over speed. Encourage children to take as much time as they need to do their best.
- Remember that homework is a child's responsibility. It is an opportunity for the child to practice and reinforce lessons learned in school and it gives teachers information about the child's skill level. Teachers need to know if an assignment is too simple, too difficult, or just right.
- Resist the temptation to give the correct answer when a child asks for help. First, ask lots of questions and encourage the child to try again: "Can you show me how to set up the problem?" "I think the answer is in the first paragraph. Try reading it again." "Let's do a similar problem together. Then you can try that one again." If the child continues to struggle with the assignment, suggest putting it aside for a while and going on to another one.
- Tell children if you don't know the answer or have no idea how to help. Suggest asking another child for help or asking the teacher at school. Share your observations with the child's parents so they can go over the assignment later and perhaps notify the teacher that their child is having difficulty.
- Offer support that reinforces children's learning. You might quiz a child studying for a test, listen to an oral presentation, read an essay, or discuss a book the child is reading.
- Suggest study tips that help children do their best. For example, introduce the "COPS" method for checking a paper. The child checks the paper four separate times: for Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation, and Spelling. Focusing on a separate item each time helps children catch their own mistakes. You can also show children how to make flash cards to study math facts or vocabulary words.
- Encourage children to apply their thinking and arithmetic skills as they play board games; writing skills when they make up plays and stories; and reading skills when they read a magazine to catch up on the activities of a favorite sports star.

Routines and transitions are also part of the schedule.

In addition to the adult- and child-initiated activities that take place each day, the daily schedule includes routines and transitions. Routines are the daily events that must take place:

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[3] Dorothy Rich, *MegaSkills* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), p. 56.

- arriving and leaving;
- eating;
- resting (after kindergarten);
- toileting;
- dressing and undressing to go outdoors (in cool weather); and
- cleaning up.

Some routines involve groups of children—everyone cleans up before school. Others are performed on an individual basis—eating, resting or relaxing, using the bathroom, washing hands. The program should be structured so children can take care of these personal routines according to their own schedules and with little or no adult assistance.

The period of time between one activity and the next is called a transition. Transitions take place when a busload of children arrives from school, a group gets ready to go bowling, or children clean up activities and interest areas at the end of the day. In these situations it is important to plan how to make the transitions go smoothly.

Children can become restless if they have nothing to do while waiting. They sometimes act in ways staff don't like—wrestling with one another or running around the room. This may be because they are bored or excited about the next event.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some suggestions for handling transitions:

- Ask children to walk quietly from one area to another (for example from your room to the gym), on their own or in small groups. Asking children to stand in line usually creates problems because they find it very difficult to stand close together without touching or bumping into each other.
- Lead songs, guessing games, and other activities that need no props with children who are ready before the others. It's helpful to make a list of "back-pocket" ideas you are comfortable leading on the spur of the moment. Put the list on a 3" x 5" index card, laminate it, and keep it with you as a resource for planned transition times and for unexpected emergencies (for example, the bus breaks down on the way to the museum and you have to wait 30 minutes for a replacement).
- Involve children in transition activities such as setting up for meals, collecting the trash, or washing the paint brushes.
- Be flexible whenever possible. Allow children extra time to complete projects or activities when they are very interested and involved. "We're going to let the Drama Club finish their rehearsal while the rest of us start clean up. Then we can all hear their plans for performing at Parent Night next week."

- Allow time for children to share their work before asking them to clean up. This can be especially important if you think other children might like to join the activity or club the next day. You can call a brief meeting or encourage children to look at projects and activities before they are dismantled.
- Establish a signal (for example, blinking lights, a special hand sign, a bell) to let children know you need quiet or that it will be time to clean up in five minutes.
- Play a clapping game when you want to quiet children down so they can listen to you. For example, ask children to follow as you clap out different beats and rhythms.
- Ask older children to make up special songs and chants to sing with the younger ones.

Consider the following criteria in planning your schedule.

An appropriate schedule for school-age programs meets the following criteria:

Before school, children can:

- choose from a number of quiet, short-term activities;
- rest if they are tired;
- have breakfast if they have not eaten at home;
- clean up quickly;
- gather homework and belongings without feeling rushed; and
- participate in transition activities while waiting for the bus.

After kindergarten, children can:

- take care of personal routines—storing belongings, using the bathroom, handwashing;
- eat a relaxed, family-style lunch;
- rest or do quiet activities;
- choose what they want to do; and
- help prepare for the arrival of older children.

After school, children can:

- take care of personal routines—storing belongings, using the bathroom, handwashing;
- select a snack if they wish;
- meet as a group—daily, weekly, or as often as needed;
- choose what they want to do—use interest areas, participate in planned activities, hold club meetings, go outdoors, use other areas (such as the gymnasium) available to the program, attend community activities (such as scouts), work on long-term projects and so on;

- join planned activities "in progress" as long as they don't cause disruptions;
- leave planned activities as they finish or lose interest;
- clean up without feeling rushed;
- gather their projects and belongings, then participate in a quiet activity or interest area until their parents arrive; and
- reconnect with their parents.

The sample daily schedule on the next page shows how a school-age program might be organized to meet the needs of children.

Sample Daily Schedule

Before School

6:30–7:00 AM Arrival	As children arrive, they participate in quiet activities (card games, puzzles, reading, listening to music with headphones, coloring, reviewing homework, or resting if still tired) and prepare for breakfast.
7:00–7:30 Breakfast	Children who eat before coming to the program continue quiet activities. As they finish breakfast, children move back to activities.
7:30–8:10 Interest areas and staff-led activity	Children participate in short term, quiet activities that do not require significant setup or cleanup or projects that can be saved if not completed (for example, an ongoing macramé project, cutting out pictures for a scrapbook collection). A staff member leads or oversees a low-key group game or activity (for example, charades, cooperative games, storytelling, mixing a batch of cookies for baking later in the day, morning stretching exercises).
8:10–8:25 Cleanup	Children help clean up the interest areas and gather belongings for school.
8:25–8:30 Leave for school (walk and/or ride school buses)	Children are released to go to school—either as walkers or bus riders. One staff member and/or older child plays short guessing games, asks riddles, or leads songs while children wait for the buses.

After Kindergarten—Early Afternoon

12:00–12:30 PM Arrival and lunch	Kindergarten children arrive from morning session, wash hands, and eat lunch with staff, family style.
12:30–1:00 Story time	Group gathers for story time.
1:00–2:00 Quiet activity time	Children participate in quiet activities or use a separate area to rest or nap.
2:00–2:10 Transition time	Children pick up or get up from resting.
2:10–2:40 Interest areas and staff-led activity	Interest areas are open. A staff member oversees a short-term art activity.
2:40–3:00 Group time	Children and staff sing songs and share; prepare for the arrival of older children; and discuss activities planned for the rest of the day.

After School

3:00–3:30 PM Arrival	Children arrive on school buses. One staff member takes attendance by doing a visual check as children arrive (rather than trying to maintain quiet for calling the roll). Children put away their belongings and play outside, eat a self-service snack, use the bathroom, or participate in quiet activities. Staff circulate and remind children to eat, use the bathroom, wash hands.
3:30–3:50 Group meeting time (daily, weekly, or as needed)	Children meet with their primary staff member. In small programs, all ages may meet together "family-style." In larger programs the different age groups may meet separately. The meeting might consist of one or more of the following: • Describing plans for the day (activity options and special projects); • Making announcements; • Discussing directions/rules; • Discussing or role-playing problems and solutions; • Sharing exciting news; • Inviting ideas for new projects and activities; and • Making up a group song, game, or mascot.
3:50–4:00 Transition	Children move to activities or interest areas.
4:00–5:30 Activity choices	Children select from the following: • Indoor interest areas; • Planned activities (such as a craft project or science experiment); • Club meetings (indoors or outdoors); • Community activities (such as scouts); • Outdoor games and/or interest areas; • Homework; and • Games and activities in gym or multipurpose room (after dark or in poor weather). Duration of activities depends on children's interests and attention spans. Children can choose when to join and leave ongoing activities as long as they don't cause disruptions.
5:30–5:45 Transition and clean up	Indoor and outdoor activities are closed. Children clean up long-term and messy projects in progress in interest areas. Children gather belongings and projects they want to take home.

5:45–6:30 Indoor activity choices and parent pick-up	The following areas are open: • Science and nature area; (playing with pets or projects that need little or no clean-up); • Quiet area; • Board and table games area (short-term games and puzzles or those that can be stopped in progress and saved); and • Large-group activity area (listening to music, conversations, charades, dramatic play activities requiring no props, and guessing games). A staff member greets parents and helps them find their children.

Why is this schedule appropriate for school-age children?

____

____

____

____

____

____

Daily Schedule

In the space below, write down your program's schedule. Complete the sections that apply to your program. Use the checklist that follows to assess your schedule.

Time	Before School

Time	After Kindergarten

Time	After School

Daily Schedule Checklist

☐ 1. Children always can choose between active and quiet things to do.
☐ 2. There is sufficient time for routines and transitions.
☐ 3. There are times for outdoor and indoor play.
☐ 4. Most of the time children can choose what they want to do.
☐ 5. The schedule offers structure and flexibility.
☐ 6. Children can be in small groups doing independent activities for most of the time.
☐ 7. There are opportunities for children to be part of the whole group.
☐ 8. There are opportunities for children to be alone.
☐ 9. Sufficient time is allowed for cleanup and other chores.

On the basis of your responses to the checklist, are there any changes you need to make to enhance your daily schedule? If so, note them on this revised daily schedule.

Revised Daily Schedule

Time	Before School

Time	After Kindergarten

Time	After School

Discuss your ideas with your trainer and your colleagues before changing your daily schedule.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for creating an appropriate program environment. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are areas you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Creating and Using a Program Environment

Organizing Indoor and Outdoor Areas to Support a Variety of Activities

1. **How did Mr. Johnson know the outdoor environment was not working?**

   a. Some children's work and play was being interrupted by other children running around.

   b. The older children in particular seemed to need more interesting and challenging materials and equipment.

   c. The younger children did not have the skills used to play volleyball and needed a more appropriate place to play.

2. **How did Mr. Johnson and the children work together to improve the outdoor area?**

   a. They cleaned and reorganized the storage shed so equipment and toys are easy to see and within reach.

   b. They set up activity boxes with materials to reflect children's interests.

   c. They discussed how to use the different areas of the playground and thought of ways to help each other.

Selecting and Arranging Developmentally Appropriate Materials and Equipment

1. **What did Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Sullivan know about the children?**

   a. The children enjoy summer vacations at the beach with their families and wished they had a way to go there even though it was winter.

   b. The children have lots of imagination and enjoy creative projects such as turning the program into an underwater world.

   c. The children like to learn about "real-life" activities such as scuba diving.

   d. The children enjoy dramatic play.

   e. The children enjoy bringing things from home to share with friends.

   f. The children have lots of ideas and suggestions.

2. How will the planned activities and new materials help children learn?

a. All the planned activities and materials will encourage children's creativity.

b. The books and magazines and the visit from a parent who is a marine biologist will stimulate children's interests and independent learning about sea life.

c. Setting up the aquarium will give children a chance to learn new skills and have increased responsibility.

d. The "sunken ship" will provide fresh opportunities for dramatic play.

e. The children will have an opportunity to learn more about scuba diving, a sport they might like to try some day.

Planning and Implementing Schedules and Routines to Meet Children's Developmental and Individual Needs

1. How do the changes planned by Ms. Chan and her colleagues reflect the needs of children after school?

a. They respect that different children have different needs at the end of the school day.

b. They provide for a smooth transition from the structured school day to a more informal tone appropriate for the school-age program.

c. They reduce the need for structure and control.

d. They allow children to choose what they want to do until it's time for group meeting.

2. In what ways might the new approach reduce the amount of noise and tension in the program?

a. Children who need to be physically active will not get impatient or fidgety while they try to sit still quietly and wait for roll call and snack.

b. Children who want to talk with friends will be free to do so.

c. Children who are hungry won't complain while they wait for others to be quiet so roll can be called before snack is served.

d. Children who need some time alone will have a chance to relax at the program before they begin activities.

Classroom Arrangements

Strengths of Floor Plan A:

- The homework table is in a quiet corner near books and magazines.
- The shelves holding science and nature materials are near the table for science and nature projects and experiments.
- Board and table games are near a table where children can sit to play games.
- Blocks and block props are in the blocks and construction area.
- The house corner equipment and furniture are together.
- The large-group activity area includes a CD and tape player along with CDs and tapes.

Weaknesses of Floor Plan A:

- All the shelves are against the walls.
- There are almost no enclosed areas.
- The easels are not near the storage area for art supplies.
- The blocks and construction area is open to the rest of the room, not protected from the large-group activity area, and too close to the pets and aquarium.
- The shelves holding math projects are too far from other areas where they could be used (for example, homework table, blocks and construction area).
- The table used for snack and club meetings is too far from the sink. It is in the center of the room where traffic will disturb children.
- The house corner furniture is not logically arranged.
- The large-group activity area is too open.
- The traffic pattern for entering the room is likely to result in children disturbing others working at the science and nature tables or playing games.
- Cubby space for personal belongings is too small and too far from the door.
- The shelves holding unfinished projects are in the large-group activity area where projects might easily be disturbed or broken.

Differences in Floor Plan B:

- Shelves are used to define different areas.
- Easels are close to the art supplies and in a protected area.
- The blocks and construction area is protected and near other active areas.
- The quiet corner is far from noisy areas; soft items (such as a rug, couch, and beanbag chairs) make this area homelike.
- The table used for snack and club meetings is closer to the water supply, and a counter is available for self service. The table is positioned to one side of the room and is near the meeting area where larger club activities could take place (for example, Drama Club practice). A shelf is available for projects and supplies.
- Pets and the aquarium have been moved to the science and nature area.
- The science and nature table is closer to the sink so it will be easier to do experiments that need water.
- Shelves holding unfinished projects are on one side of the room away from active areas where they might be disturbed.
- Rugs provide comfort and definition for the quiet area, large-group activity area, and the blocks and construction area.
- House corner furniture is more logically arranged.
- Shelves for math projects are closer to the quiet corner and the blocks and construction area.
- The meeting and large-group activity area is near the entrance and is a convenient place for children to gather at arrival and dismissal times and during transitions. There is more space for cubbies, and they are close to the entrance.

How Is Plan B Better?

- Children can work in small interest areas and feel more protected.
- The blocks and construction area is protected so block buildings are not as likely to be knocked down.
- Quiet interest areas (arts and crafts, science and nature, and board and table games) are grouped together.
- The pets and aquarium are more logically located—in the science and nature area, near the water supply.
- Materials are stored on shelves in the areas where they are to be used.
- The house corner can spill over into the blocks and construction area for related dramatic play activities.

GLOSSARY

Daily schedule	How you anticipate and plan for the day's activities. The plan includes the times of day and the order in which activities will occur.
Environment	The complete makeup of the indoor and outdoor areas used by the children. The environment includes the space and how it is arranged and furnished, routines, materials and equipment, planned and unplanned activities, and the people who are present.
Interest Area	A clearly-defined space with materials and equipment focused on a theme or type of activity.
Routines	Scheduled activities that occur every day, including meals, rest times, toileting, washing hands, and going outdoors, which can all offer opportunities for children to learn.
Sub-area	Materials and equipment related to children's specific interests, housed in a related interest area.
Transitions	The in-between times in a daily schedule when children have completed an activity or routine and are moving to the next one.

Module 4: PHYSICAL

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OVERVIEW

PROMOTING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT INVOLVES:

- reinforcing and encouraging physical development through an appropriate environment, activities, and interactions;
- providing equipment and opportunities for gross motor development; and
- providing equipment and opportunities for fine motor development.

Adults use a wide range of physical skills every day. We walk and run, often several miles a day, in our homes and at work. We open car doors, carry boxes, and climb stairs. We grasp pencils, cups, and other small items and use tools such as scissors and computer keyboards. Because we regularly use our large and small muscles, we rarely think about the skills involved. In fact, however, we have developed these physical skills through many years of practice.

Physical development refers to the gradual gaining of control over large and small muscles. It includes acquiring gross motor skills such as walking, running, and throwing, and fine motor skills such as holding, pinching, and flexing fingers and toes. Coordinating movement is also an important part of physical development. For example, eye-hand coordination (the ability to direct finger, hand, and wrist movements) is used by school-age children to accomplish fine motor tasks such as fitting a piece in a puzzle or threading a needle. In addition, children use all their senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—to coordinate the movement of their large and small muscles.

Physical development involves fine and gross motor skills and coordination.

A tremendous amount of physical development takes place before and during the school-age years. Children learn to control their body muscles and to refine the physical skills they will use for the rest of their lives. Although these skills are retained during adolescence and adulthood, new skills are not usually acquired. Therefore, it is crucial for children to have many opportunities to learn and practice basic physical skills.

School-age children practice the physical skills they will use all their lives.

Children develop physical skills in a similar pattern of progression. Most children control their head movements first. Next, they develop control of their torsos and arms, and finally their legs. Generally, moving hands and feet in highly skilled ways comes last. Gross motor skills usually appear before those involving small muscles. Movement normally begins with muscles close to the body center and progresses outward as the child matures.

Each child learns and uses physical skills according to his or her own "body clock." For example, some children can ride a two-wheeler at age 5; others are 9 years old before they master this skill. Although the age when children accomplish a skill varies from child to child, the pattern rarely does.

Physical development is often tied to self-esteem.

For most school-age children, acquiring physical skills is closely tied to feeling accepted by peers, having strong self-concepts, and developing positive attitudes toward their own bodies. Some children have well-developed physical skills; others may seem awkward because of their uneven physical growth. For example, Stacy is not a strong swimmer yet, but she is already an accomplished ice skater. Children who have had many successful experiences using their fine and gross motor skills tend to believe they are competent. They are likely to continue to accept new challenges without worrying about failure.

Adults play an important role in promoting children's physical development. They provide ample, safe spaces indoors and outdoors for children to engage in physical activities that are fun and will keep them fit. Programs need to schedule time for active play each day, offer a range of interesting sports, games, and fitness activities, and encourage all children to participate. Staff can promote physical development by encouraging children's efforts as they practice new skills and eventually master them.

Listed on the next page are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in promoting children's physical development.

Reinforcing and Encouraging Physical Development Through an Appropriate Environment, Activities, and Interactions

Schedule time for active outdoor play every day. "The snow is still deep enough for sledding. You can use the snow saucers to go down the hill by the playground."

Provide opportunities for indoor active play during bad weather. "It's raining hard today, so the gym will be open all afternoon."

Help and encourage children as they learn new skills. "Yannick, I think the birds will all want to build a nest in your birdhouse. I'm impressed by how you used the jigsaw to cut out scalloped edges for the roof."

Encourage children to use their large and small muscles in coordinated ways. "The clay may need some water, Mickey. You can add a little at a time and work it into the clay until it is easier to use."

Help children develop an awareness of rhythm so they can coordinate their movements. "Reggae music has its own beat. Can you hear the way the beat repeats itself over and over?"

Provide a variety of materials that challenge a wide range of skill levels. "While you're learning to crochet, try using the thick yarn and fat crochet hooks. When you get more experienced, it will be easier to use the thin yarn and hooks."

Introduce children to games and activities that build physical skills and encourage cooperation. "If you think it's a good idea, we're going to try playing softball in a way that allows everyone to keep trying until they get a hit. It should be fun and will help everyone improve their hitting skills."

Encourage children to make up and organize their own games. "We don't have soccer on today's schedule, Wendy, but you and your friends can get out the equipment and organize your own game."

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Gross Motor Development

Encourage children to use their large muscles during daily routines. For example, ask children to help you move equipment safely.

Plan and implement increasingly difficult activities involving the use of large muscles that children use in sports and games. "Margo and Janice, now that you've mastered the obstacle course, can you rearrange the tires and boards to make it more challenging?"

Plan and implement activities that help all children develop and maintain physical fitness. "Next month we're going to have weekly guest instructors from the health center who will introduce us to different ways to stay fit—aerobics, jogging, yoga, and old-fashioned exercises such as jumping jacks."

Make sure children take breaks and have plenty of drinking water available during active play periods. "Everyone needs to drink a little water before we start jogging."

Introduce new games and activities regularly so children are exposed to different ways to use their muscles. "Serena suggested we set up an interest area for children who like to work out. We have aerobics tapes, jump ropes, and hula hoops. What else could we include for a work-out area?"

Suggest children use stopwatches and graph paper to measure and keep track of their own progress in activities such as running, bike riding, or jump roping. "Carla, your chart shows that since you started running you've improved your time by more than a minute. At this rate you're going to end up in the Olympics!"

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Fine Motor Development

Provide a variety of materials that require children to use their small muscles. "Lloyd and Maddie, would you like to use the tools to take apart the broken radio?"

Plan and implement increasingly difficult activities in which small muscles are used. "The Stitchery Club has been meeting for about a month now. At first we sewed pictures using thick yarn, needles with large eyes, and burlap. Now we are sewing cross-stitch pictures using embroidery floss."

Provide materials that fit together, such as puzzles and Legos, so children can use their fine motor skills. "Raoul and Emma are building a skyscraper. They used boxes of different sizes for the bottom floors, and now they've switched to small plastic bricks for the top ones. So far it's four feet tall."

Provide activities, materials, and equipment that accommodate different skill levels. "You can use the wood scraps for your project, or you can learn to measure and cut wood to fit your own design."

Offer children the chance to learn real skills as well as to explore materials on their own. "Aaron is an accomplished baker. He experiments with different combinations of ingredients, then he braids the dough and shapes the loaves like different animals."

Follow up on adult-led projects with opportunities for children to explore the same materials on their own. "Today we're going to learn how to make shadow puppets. We'll leave the supplies in the arts and crafts area so you can make more puppets on your own."

Promoting Children's Physical Development

In the following situations, school-age staff are promoting children's physical development. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Reinforcing and Encouraging Physical Development Through an Appropriate Environment, Activities, and Interactions

Diana and Bradley are eating snack and talking. "My sister is in seventh grade and she's going to a dance at school," says Diana. "My brother is going to that dance, too," says Bradley. "I saw him practicing in front of the mirror. He thought nobody was watching." "I like to dance," says Diana. "My sister has been teaching me how." "Maybe we could have our own dance here," says Bradley. "Let's ask Bob." They find Mr. Brody in the arts and crafts area helping Sandra get her knitting back on the needles. "Can we have our own dance at the program?" asks Diana. Sandra joins in: "Yeah, that would be so much fun! Can we?" Mr. Brody asks the children what kind of dance they would like to have. "Well," says Bradley, "when my mom heard about the dance my brother is going to, she asked him if it was a sock hop. He laughed, but she told me sock hops are really fun. Maybe we can have a sock hop." "I've heard of sock hops, too," says Diana. "You listen to old rock and roll songs, and wear white socks and twirly skirts with poodles on them." Mr. Brody suggests the children bring up their idea at the next group meeting. If other children are interested, they can learn dances from the fifties, make costumes, and plan when and where to have the dance. "I already know how to do some rock 'n roll dances," says Sandra. "My mom's a great dancer." Mr. Brody responds, "I'm not a great dancer, but I could learn. Do you think your mom would come in to teach us?" "I'll ask her tonight," says Sandra. "This will be so much fun," says Bradley. "I can hardly wait for tomorrow."

1. **What did Mr. Brody do to encourage the children's physical development?**

2. **Why did Mr. Brody suggest the children bring up their idea at the next group meeting?**

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Gross Motor Development

Whether he's playing basketball or learning a new dance step, Renaldo likes to be active. Today during free play time, he goes to the gym to use the movement stations. Ms. Tunis has posted eight skill cards on the walls at one end of the gym. Each card describes a different activity. Renaldo wants to improve his jump shot in basketball, so he starts at the first station, which lists ten different ways to jump. Renaldo jumps high, claps his hands over his head, then lands on his feet with knees bent. He jumps high and claps his hands behind his back. After several more jumps, he finishes the station by jumping as high as he can, as far as he can, and as quietly as he can. He asks Ms. Tunis which other station would be good for a basketball player. She suggests the throwing and catching station. Renaldo proceeds to the new station where he performs a variety of movements that involve throwing a ball up in the air, clapping hands, letting the ball bounce, and dribbling with his right and left hands. For the last movement Renaldo dribbles the ball down a line and back, sits down with his legs spread apart and dribbles the ball between his legs, and lies down on his back and throws the ball up in the air and catches it. Ms. Tunis watches him finish the last movement and says, "You're really getting to be a good ball handler." "Thanks," says Renaldo. "These movement stations are really fun. I think I'll try the hopping one next." "Okay," says Ms. Tunis, "But first go have a drink of water. It's easy to get overheated when you're exercising."

1. Why did Ms. Tunis set up the movement stations?

2. How did Ms. Tunis support Renaldo's development of gross motor skills?

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Fine Motor Development

Playing jacks is the latest fad among the older children at the program. Three children, Penny, Kate, and Ruthie are playing a game. Dana and Charles, both seven, watch intently. "Will you teach us to play?" asks Dana. "You're too little," says Kate. "When I was your age I couldn't play jacks." You'll have to wait until you're older." Ruthie joins in, "Besides, Charles can't play jacks, he's a boy." Mr. Shepard overhears and strolls over. "Charles," he says, "Did I hear you want to learn to play jacks?" "Yeah," responds Charles. "Do you know how?" Mr. Shepard bends down to Charles' level and replies, "Yes, I know how to play jacks. I also know another game like jacks that you might enjoy. Would you like to learn to play?" "Yes," says Charles. "Me, too," says Dana. Mr. Shepard retrieves a box labeled Chopstick Jacks from the supply cabinet and hands it to Dana and Charles. Inside are ten chopsticks, two small balls like the ones used for jacks, and an instruction card. The instructions say to lay the chopsticks in a straight line. Dana and Charles lay them end to end. Mr. Shepard demonstrates throwing the ball up in the air, then immediately picking up a stick and catching the ball in the same hand after letting it bounce once. "Can you do that?" he asks. Charles and Dana nod. Each child takes a ball and tries to pick up a chopstick. It takes a few tries to get the hang of it. Mr. Shepard explains, "Now, take turns until all the chopsticks have been picked up. Then you start again." Charles and Dana begin their game. Penny, Kate, and Ruthie come over to watch. Mr. Shepard thinks, "Maybe this is the start of a new fad!"

1. **How did Mr. Shepard accommodate the different skill levels of the children?**

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2. **How did Mr. Shepard encourage the fine motor development of Charles and Dana?**

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Taking Care of Your Own Body[1]

You need to take care of yourself.

As a school-age staff member, you are concerned about children's physical development. Yet to work well, it is essential that you take care of yourself, too. How many times a day do you:

- bend from the waist to pick up an item on the floor?
- participate in active games without first warming up?
- carry heavy boxes or equipment?
- sit on the floor and bend forward to play with a child?
- sit on a child-sized chair?

Try these suggestions.

These are normal activities for staff in school-age programs. They are also activities that can produce sore backs and limbs. There are ways to maintain good posture and flexibility and to avoid physical pain as you work with active children. Here are some suggested practices:

- Keep your lower back as straight as possible and avoid slouching when sitting or standing.
- Put one foot up on a stool or step when standing for a long time.
- Bend your knees, not your back, when you are leaning forward.
- Wear low-heeled, soft-soled, comfortable shoes to maintain proper posture.
- Bend your knees, tuck in your buttocks, and pull in your abdominal muscles when lifting a heavy object.
- Avoid twisting when lifting or lowering a heavy object. Hold the object close to you.
- Stretch your muscles before playing an active game with children. (It's a good idea for children to stretch their muscles, too.)
- Use adult-sized tables and chairs, whenever possible.
- Talk with your supervisor and colleagues about staff coverage for short breaks. Relax during these breaks! (Doing some stretching exercises is also a good way to spend breaks.)

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[1] Based on Susan S. Aronson, M.D., "Coping With the Physical Requirements of Caregiving," *Child Care Information Exchange* (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, May 1987), pp. 39-40.

Working with children is physically demanding.

Working with children is a physically demanding job. To be fully involved with school-age children, you need to be in good physical shape. Think about your daily movements and your environment, and answer the questions below.

How can you improve your posture and movements throughout the day?

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What changes to the environment or the schedule can you suggest so you and your colleagues can avoid sore backs and limbs?

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The suggestions you have just read and the ones you noted above, along with regular exercise and good health and nutrition practices, can help you promote your own physical development along with that of school-age children.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to promote children's physical development. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

	I Do This		
Reinforcing and Encouraging Physical Development Through an Appropriate Environment, Activities, and Interactions	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Providing space and time so children can engage in active play every day.	☐	☐	☐
2. Encouraging children when they are learning new skills and providing assistance upon request.	☐	☐	☐
3. Suggesting ways children can coordinate movement of their large and small muscles.	☐	☐	☐
4. Helping children develop an awareness of rhythm so they can coordinate their movements.	☐	☐	☐
5. Observing and recording information about each child's physical strengths, interests, and needs.	☐	☐	☐
6. Providing a variety of materials and activities to challenge a wide range of physical capabilities.	☐	☐	☐
7. Introducing children to games and activities that encourage physical development and cooperation.	☐	☐	☐
8. Encouraging children to make up and organize their own games.	☐	☐	☐
Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Gross Motor Development			
9. Encouraging children to use their large muscles during daily routines.	☐	☐	☐
10. Planning and implementing increasingly difficult activities involving the use of large muscles that children use in sports and games.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Gross Motor Development

(continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
11. Providing activities, materials, and equipment that allow all children to develop and maintain physical fitness.	☐	☐	☐
12. Making sure children take breaks from vigorous activity and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration.	☐	☐	☐
13. Introducing new games and activities regularly so children learn different ways to use their muscles.	☐	☐	☐
14. Encouraging children to keep track of their own progress, rather than comparing themselves to each other.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Fine Motor Development

15. Providing a variety of materials that require children to use their small muscles.	☐	☐	☐
16. Providing activities, materials, and equipment that accommodate different fine motor skill levels.	☐	☐	☐
17. Planning and implementing increasingly difficult activities in which small muscles are used.	☐	☐	☐
18. Offering children opportunities to learn real skills as well as to explore materials on their own.	☐	☐	☐
19. Following up on adult-led projects by providing materials children can explore on their own.	☐	☐	☐
20. Providing materials that fit together such as puzzles and Legos, so children can use their fine motor skills.	☐	☐	☐
21. Follow up on adult-led projects with opportunities for children to explore the same materials on their own.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 4, Physical.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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II. Observing and Planning for Children's Physical Development 252

III. Providing a Variety of Physical Activities 259

IV. Using the Environment to Encourage Fine Motor Skills 274

V. Helping Children Develop Positive Self-Concepts Through Physical Development 278

Learning Activity I.

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Encourage Physical Fitness[2]

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical behaviors of school-age children; and
- use what you know about children to encourage physical fitness.

It's important to encourage all children to be physically active.

Most children are naturally drawn to physical activity. In school playgrounds, backyards, and on city streets, children organize their own activities—running races, climbing trees, or playing hopscotch. After a day at school, children are usually eager to participate in active physical play.

Some children do not have enough opportunities to exercise, play sports, or otherwise play actively. Although physical education is offered in most schools, only one state, Illinois, provides daily physical education for all children from kindergarten through grade 12. A 1987 study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health found from age 6 on, today's children weigh more and have more body fat than did children 20 years ago. Since the 1960s, obesity (defined as being 20 percent above the ideal weight for age, sex, and height) has increased by more than 50 percent among children aged 6 to 11.[3]

Your school-age program can play an important role by providing a wide variety of physical activities that appeal to as many children as possible—not just the athletically talented. Children are likely to make physical exercise a lifelong habit if they are given the time and space to stretch and use their muscles, along with sincere encouragement for their efforts and accomplishments.

Children's physical skills can vary greatly from those of their peers.

Physical skills develop according to individual time clocks. Within a given age group there can be great variation in physical skills. A few of the children who learn skills earlier than their age mates have natural ability. Others who develop earlier are on a "faster" time clock, which does not necessarily lead to becoming a star athlete. School-age children tend to be very aware of their own physical skills and those of their peers. Those who have "slower" time clocks may get discouraged and give up favorite sports and activities because they feel they are "no good" and never will be. With continued encouragement, however, they can eventually develop physical skills and enjoy a wide variety of sports and exercise activities.

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[2] Parts of this learning activity are based on Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., M.P.H., *Kid Fitness: A Complete Shape-Up Program from Birth Through High School* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), pp. 33-62.

[3] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Descriptions of the physical development of school-age children of different ages appear below.

5- to 7-Year-Old Children

In the early school-age years (approximately ages 5 to 7), physical growth slows, weight gain is moderate and even, and boys and girls are relatively equal in physical skills. Children want to do things well but are not always as coordinated as they would like to be.

Typically, after a day in school, these younger children have lots of energy to burn but can become easily tired. They need a schedule that alternates periods of activity and rest. Physical activities such as swimming, skating, riding bikes, doing gymnastics, playing hopscotch, jumping rope, climbing, running, and playing tag are most appropriate for this age group.

In the early school-age years, children are beginning to enjoy organized group play and team sports; however, they are not really ready for competition. Organized sports, played without the pressure of winning or losing, can help them stay fit and develop physical skills they will continue to use as they get older.

Children in this age group are perfecting coordination of large and small muscles and perceptual motor coordination. They are developing a sense of rhythm and enjoy dancing and activities that involve moving their bodies to music.

The following examples depict the physical development of children ages 5 to 7. At the end, add an example of the physical development of a 5- to 7-year-old child enrolled in your program.

- Nathan loves to play T-ball. He's a strong runner—when he catches the ball he is as likely to run with it as he is to throw it to first base. During games he often daydreams and may forget important rules. He has to stop to think before following instructions such as "Throw the ball to Daniel." After he hits the ball he stops to think before running. Once, he hit the ball, then ran around the bases the wrong way.

- Peter is not interested in team sports, but he enjoys other kinds of physical activity. He can hop on one foot for a long distance and likes to skip across the playground. He can walk the full length of a balance beam without stepping off. He likes to climb to the top of the jungle gym and "walk" across the monkey bars with his arms.
- Marisa has been playing soccer for two years. She recently developed the ability to react spontaneously—she can kick the soccer ball and automatically run up the field after it. She used to stop after she kicked the ball while thinking about what to do next. She's becoming more aware of her physical skills and limits. When other children make fun of her or tell her she can't kick the ball far enough, she gets very discouraged.

Example of the physical development of a 5- to 7-year-old child in your program:

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Describe something you do to encourage the physical fitness of children in this age group:

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8- to 10-Year-Old Children

In the middle school-age years (approximately ages 8 to 10), body strength increases and coordination and reaction times improve. Children learn to coordinate their physical skills; for example, they are able to run and dribble a basketball at the same time. Some children become interested in competitive sports—either team sports such as soccer or individual sports such as swimming. A National Children and Youth Fitness Study conducted in 1987 reported 84 percent of children in this age group participated in physical activity through at least one community group.

At this age many children compare their abilities to their peers. If they believe their skills are not as good as another's, they may become discouraged and stop participating in physical activities. This is unfortunate because most children in this age group have not yet begun their growth spurt and have not developed their muscle power. They may also lack the nerve connections necessary to activate the full force of the muscles they do have.

There is wide variation in the muscle strength and physical power in any given group of children aged 8 to 10. Adults may consider some children to be unathletic when in fact they are "late bloomers" who will eventually be able to develop many physical skills. You can encourage children to exercise to release tension, to make their muscles strong, and to practice and develop skills. This encouragement will help children make exercise part of their lifelong routines.

The following examples depict the physical development of children ages 8 to 10. At the end, add an example of the physical development of an 8- to 10-year-old child enrolled in your program.

- Paul, Nick, and Terrence are good friends. They spend a lot of time discussing each other's physical abilities, often in very critical terms. "We would have won if you hadn't dropped the ball." "I can throw much further than you can." "I'm younger than you are, but I can skate backwards and you can't skate forward without falling down." Ms. Cikovsky overhears their conversation and writes herself a note to be sure to plan some cooperative games that accommodate a wide range of skill levels.
- Teresa really enjoys basketball. She is tall for her age and is a high scorer in games. She's not very good at passing the ball to her teammates, however. She knows she needs to practice passing, so she asks a friend to run up and down the gym with her, passing the ball back and forth. After 30 minutes of this vigorous activity, both girls are exhausted. (Sweat glands of children who have not entered puberty produce only about 40 percent as much sweat as do adult glands. They get overheated easily and need to drink plenty of water when exercising vigorously.)
- Lisa has stopped playing in the daily after-school soccer games. When asked by Ms. Jones why she isn't playing any more, Lisa explains, "The boys think they are bigger and stronger, so they never pass the ball to girls. It's just not fun any more." Ms. Jones agrees it can be frustrating when the boys don't recognize her skills—she's very fast and an expert dribbler. She encourages Lisa to continue playing soccer. She also plans to observe the children's soccer game and work with her colleagues to encourage the players to include everyone in the game.

Example of the physical development of an 8- to 10-year old child in your program:

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Describe something you do to encourage the physical fitness of children in this age group:

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11- to 12-Year-Old Children

Most 11- to 12-year-old children like to move their bodies and may work hard to polish their physical skills. Some may test the limits of their physical skills; therefore, they continue to need close supervision. It's important to supervise without being overprotective, as these children have a great need to be independent and to control their own activities.

Up to about age 10, boys and girls are generally equal in physical development. Typically girls go through a growth spurt at age 11½ to 12, while boys go through a similar stage about two years later. After age 10, as girls enter puberty, they may develop increased body fat, and decreased size, endurance, and muscle power in comparison to boys. These changes may cause girls to feel sports are for boys and less rigorous activities are for girls. You and your colleagues can counteract this trend by encouraging girls to stay involved in sports. When girls maintain their interest in sports they are likely to develop physical skills later in their teens.

The height increases and weight gains triggered by entering puberty generally are an advantage for boys. The boys in this age group who are slower to develop, however, tend to be less skilled athletically and may drop out of organized sports because they feel they can't keep up with their age mates. This does not mean they will remain less skilled. When encouraged to continue physical fitness programs, many boys who mature later in their teens become outstanding athletes.

The following examples depict the physical development of children ages 11 to 12. At the end, add an example depicting the physical development of an 11- or 12-year-old child in your program.

- Brenda is the program's Double Dutch Champion. Until this year she didn't participate in many sports or games; however, she did spend a lot of her free time dancing and doing aerobics with her friends. When Ms. Reynolds congratulated her for winning the jump rope contest, Brenda said she couldn't have done it without the support of her two friends who turned the ropes. Ms. Reynolds said, "Well, yes, that's true—they did help you a lot. And I remember seeing you practicing every afternoon for the last few months. You worked hard to develop those skills." Brenda needs to be reminded her physical accomplishments are the result of her athletic ability and hard work.
- Jonathan is small for his age and has a hard time keeping up with some of the more developed boys in games and sports. He loves to run, however, and participates in the school-age program's Jogging Club. Three times a week this group goes on a 20-minute jog around the field. This activity is increasing Jonathan's strength and building his endurance. It's also keeping him interested in physical activities and giving him the opportunity to develop a lifelong fitness habit.
- Marisa is going through puberty. She used to be one of the best basketball players at the school-age program. Even though she is still a skilled athlete, she sometimes has trouble keeping up with the athletic boys her age who are taller and stronger and never seem to get tired. Mr. Knight has noticed Marisa tends to spend less and less time enjoying physical activities. Instead, she listens to music or makes up plays with her friends. He asks Marisa to help him plan some new physical activities for the program. Together they come up with several ideas for games and activities she and the others will enjoy. Mr. Knight will run a basketball clinic for the younger children, with Marisa's help. This will allow her to stay active and to feel good about her physical abilities.

Example of the physical development of an 11- to 12-year-old child in your program:

Describe something you do to encourage the physical fitness of children in this age group:

Discuss this activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity II.
Observing and Planning for Children's Physical Development

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify children's developing fine and gross motor skills; and
- offer activities that help children practice fine and gross motor skills.

School-age children use their fine motor skills in many activities.

Fine motor skills such as holding, pinching, and flexing fingers and toes involve use of small muscles. School-age children use their small muscles in many different ways. Coordinating hands, fingers, and wrists is necessary for writing, drawing, and lacing shoes. Strength in small muscles is needed for typing on a computer keyboard and using woodworking tools. Control is required for holding cooking utensils, playing musical instruments, and tying macramé knots. Fine motor skills are refined, adapted, and used throughout life for activities such as sewing, baking bread, and repairing car engines.

Children use their senses to coordinate movements.

Sensory awareness—using sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell to get information—is a large part of fine motor development. Activities in which children use their senses as they manipulate objects help them coordinate movements. For example, an activity such as making carrot muffins and lemonade for snack can provide experiences such as these:

- sight: peeling, slicing, and grating carrots;
- sound: cracking eggs on the side of a bowl;
- touch: rolling the lemons to make them juicier;
- taste: sipping the lemonade to see if it needs more sugar; and
- smell: breathing the fragrance of the spices in the hot muffins.

While a variety of cognitive concepts are learned during this type of activity, fine motor skills are also developed as children get information from their senses.

On the next page are some examples of school-age children using their fine motor skills. For each one, note the ways in which the child used fine motor skills.

When Antwan arrived at the program this morning, he undid his coat zipper, took off the coat, and hung it in his cubby. He tightened the buckles on his overalls and retied his sneaker laces. Next, he played a board game with two friends, drew a picture, and turned the pages in the dinosaur book looking for the picture of the Stegosaurus. At breakfast he ate cereal with a spoon, poured juice from a pitcher, and buttered a muffin with a knife. While waiting for the school bus, he used a pencil to write his name over and over on a piece of paper until the page was filled.

How did Antwan use his fine motor skills?

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When Stacy arrived at the program after school, she unbuckled her backpack, took out her social studies homework, and stuffed the backpack in her cubby. She unbuttoned her sweater, took it off, and hung it up by looping the tag over a hook. She put her homework down on the table and went to get her snack. She chose some fresh fruit (grapes and orange slices) and returned to the homework table. As she read her assignment, she plucked each grape and popped it in her mouth. Next, she picked the seeds out of each orange slice and then held the slices with two fingers as she sucked the juice out. She popped one slice between her teeth and lips and turned to Kyle. "That's gross," said Kyle. Her homework finished, Stacy decided to listen to music. She selected a tape, placed it in the player, and closed the lid. She hooked up the head phones, put them on her head, and pushed the play button. While she was listening, she moved her fingers in time with the music.

How did Stacy use her fine motor skills?

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Gross motor skills are used in sports, games, routines, and activities.

Gross motor skills such as walking, running, and throwing involve large muscles. These are the skills used for many of the physical fitness activities discussed in Learning Activity I. Professor Vern Seefeldt of Michigan State University has identified 21 basic gross motor skills children and adults use in sports and games.[4] He suggests teaching these skills to children who are developmentally ready to learn them as early as possible so they can enjoy a wide variety of physical activities. These skills are listed below. For each one, give an example of how it is used by children in a routine, game, sport, or other activity. One example is provided for each skill area.

Object control skills

kicking, as when *playing kickball*

throwing overhand, as when ____________

throwing underhand, as when ____________

catching, as when ____________

punting, as when ____________

dribbling or bouncing a ball several times in a row, as when ____________

striking a ball with a bat or racket, as when, ____________

trapping a ball with the feet, as when ____________

Locomotor skills

running, as when *doing laps around the gym*

jumping over an obstacle, as when ____________

hopping, skipping, as when ____________

balancing on one foot, as when ____________

galloping, as when ____________

leaping forward, as when ____________

rolling forward (somersault), as when ____________

rolling backward, as when ____________

sliding while standing, as when ____________

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[4] Based on Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., M.P.H., *Kid Fitness: A Complete Shape-Up Program from Birth Through High School* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), pp. 30-31.

Non locomotor skills

lifting, as when *carrying a heavy box*

pulling, as when ____________________

pushing, as when ____________________

These skills can serve as the basis for more complex movements and abilities. For example, if Kerry can use a plastic bat to hit a ball placed on the ground, she might be ready to try hitting the ball as it is rolled to her. If Jared can slide while standing, then he can probably try roller skating.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you observe one of the children in your group over two three-day periods. During the first three days, identify the gross motor skills you see the child using; during the second three days, identify the fine motor skills you see the child using. Then plan activities that give the child opportunities to practice and refine his or her gross and fine motor skills. Begin by reviewing the example that follows.

Gross Motor Skills

(Example)

Child: *Alex* **Age:** *8 years* **Date:** *May 5-7*

Gross motor skills this child has mastered:

Riding a two-wheeler
Dribbling soccer ball the full length of field
Bouncing on a pogo stick
Pitching a ball underhand

Gross motor skills this child is learning:

Passing the ball to another player
Dancing to music
Doing a pull-up

Activities that are appropriate for this child:

A sports clinic to practice passing
Movement activities to focus on rhythm and moving to music
A variety of strength development activities, such as arm curls with small cans or more time playing on the monkey bars

Fine Motor Skills

(Example)

Child: *Alex* **Age:** *8 years* **Date:** *May 10-12*

Fine motor skills this child has mastered:

Cursive writing
Hammering a nail straight
Using eating utensils
Playing the recorder

Fine motor skills this child is learning:

Cutting with an X-acto knife
Using a whisk to beat eggs
Threading small beads to make jewelry

Activities that are appropriate for this child:

Using a greater variety of woodworking tools
Making clay beads
Soap carving

Gross Motor Skills

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

Gross motor skills this child has mastered:

Gross motor skills this child is learning:

Activities that are appropriate for this child:

Fine Motor Skills

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Fine motor skills this child has mastered:

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Fine motor skills this child is learning:

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Activities that are appropriate for this child:

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Discuss your observations and plans with your trainer.

Learning Activity III.
Providing a Variety of Physical Activities

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- plan and implement a wide range of physical activities to accommodate the needs and interests of all children in the program; and
- encourage all children to use and practice their physical skills.

Physical Fitness Activities

Physical fitness is an important goal for children and adults. Therefore, it is important to encourage **all** children to participate in physical activities—those with highly developed skills and those who are slower to develop skills. Some children enjoy playing sports that require specific skills such as throwing, hitting, or dribbling a ball. Others like activities such as aerobic dancing that promote overall fitness.

Some children may resist physical activity. They might have "dropped out" of a once-favorite sport or they might think of themselves as unathletic. You can encourage their participation by pointing out the benefits of physical fitness—"you'll be able to hike all the way around the lake without getting tired"—rather than telling them they need to spend less time enjoying their favorite sedentary activities.

Another excellent strategy for encouraging chidren's participation in physical activities is to get involved yourself. When you jog around the track, take a turn jumping rope, or play volleyball with the children you are sending the message that staying fit is important throughout our lives. (See Module 13, Professionalism, for more information on taking care of your physical well-being.)

Try these suggestions.

Listed below are physical fitness activities the children in your program may enjoy. Add your own suggestions in the space provided.

Create an obstacle course. Children can build a challenging obstacle course using barrels, tires, inner tubes, tumbling mats, hula hoops, orange safety cones, and anything else they can think of. When the group has mastered the course, the builders can redesign it to create new challenges.

Establish an exercise activity area. Include jump ropes, instructions for floor and other exercises, a tape player and music tapes for aerobic dancing, soft balls and beanbags, and other popular exercise paraphernalia.

Make an "Around the World" dance prop box. Include pictures of dancers in traditional dress, instructions for different dances, props to wear or dance with, and tapes with music from different lands. Staff can introduce the dances; children can then use the prop box on their own.

Hold sports clinics. Some days, instead of playing sports, you can hold clinics to build the skills children use in these games. For example, during a kickball clinic, staff and older children could review the rules of the game, lead the children in drills to practice kicking, pitching, and fielding the ball as if in a game, and play games that help improve their running and throwing.

Provide a variety of equipment to be used alone or with a friend. This is particularly important for children who are not drawn to sports or organized games. Examples include hula hoops, stilts, pogo sticks, soft balls and paddles, yo-yos, chalk for hopscotch, roller skates (and safety equipment), jump ropes, bean bags, and ring tosses.

Offer exercise clubs such as Aerobics, Jogging, or Tumbling Clubs. Children of all ages and abilities can participate in clubs such as these. Staff, community volunteers, or children can serve as leaders/instructors.

Activities for Building Skills

Some children are reluctant to join in organized games and sports because they think they don't have the skills to be a successful player. School-age children are very sensitive to their physical abilities and frequently compare themselves with their peers. Rather than trying to explain that some children's physical development "time clocks" work at a slower pace than others, you can offer activities that will help children build skills such as catching, kicking, jumping, balancing, dribbling, and hitting. Children will enjoy these activities because they are challenging, there are no winners or losers, and, most importantly, they are fun. You can introduce these activities and lead them the first time. After children understand the activity they can set it up and play by themselves, taking turns as the leader. Some examples of skill-building activities appear on the next page.

Skill-Building Activities[5]

Stepping Out

Ages/Players: 5 to 6 years, one at a time **Equipment**: 27 egg cartons
Skill: Balancing, tiptoeing **Location**: Indoors

Use the egg cartons to make two rows of squares, with five squares in each row. The rows are connected with no space between them. Children take off their shoes and take turns tiptoeing one foot at a time through each square without touching the egg cartons.

Underhand Knockdown

Ages/Players: 8 to 12 years, one at a time **Equipment:** Foam ball, five egg cartons, table
Skill: Throwing at a target **Location**: Indoors

Stack the egg cartons on the table. The first child stands about ten feet away from the table and throws the ball underhand trying to hit the stack. After all children have had a turn, they move back two feet and repeat the activity. The throw is considered successful if any of the egg cartons fall down.

Nerve Ball

Ages/Players: 8 to 12 years, one at a time **Equipment**: Foam ball
Skill: Catching **Location**: Outdoors or indoors (gym)

One child stands with back turned, 15 to 20 feet away from the rest of the players standing in a line. The first player in line throws the ball towards the "catcher's" back, yelling "ball" as he or she releases it. This is the cue for the child to turn around, catch the ball, run it back to the next child in line, and go to the end of the line. The child who threw the ball takes the place of the "catcher" and the next child in line throws the ball. Children can repeat the activity until all have had one or more turns in each position. An alternative is to have a staff member throw the ball while the children take turns as the "catcher."

Dribble About

Ages/Players: 10 to 12 years, one at a time **Equipment**: Basketball/utility ball, egg cartons
Skill: Dribbling **Location**: Outdoors or indoors (gym)

Set up egg cartons in two parallel lines about ten feet apart, with about five feet between each carton. Children dribble the ball in a zigzag motion around and between the egg cartons.

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[5] Based with permission on Linda Ouellete and James Parcelli, *Games Kids Play* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Office for Children, 1981).

Movement Stations[6]

Children can also use movement stations to develop and improve specific skills, such as jumping, hopping, throwing, and catching. Each station includes (1) instructions printed on a large poster board and (2) whatever equipment might be needed. To meet the needs of children at different stages of development, the movement stations should address a variety of skill levels. Children can select which activities to do and perform them at their own pace. New challenges can be added as children develop new skills.

You can set up movement stations in a gym or other large room. For some stations, you need to make a line on the floor with masking tape (or another tape that is easily removed). The children can help you set up the stations, or you can do so before they arrive. When you introduce the stations, "walk" the children through the instructions for each one. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate the different movements. You can offer encouragement, explain instructions that might be confusing, and remind children to drink plenty of water when they are exercising. Some children may want to keep track of their progress. You can provide stop watches, yardsticks, and paper and pencil so they can keep individual exercise diaries.

Descriptions of eight movement stations follow. They should be set up as an optional activity for children who are interested in participating.

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[6] Based with permission on materials developed by the Fairfax County Office for Children, Fairfax, VA.

Movement Stations

1. Jumping

- Jump high, clap hands over head, land on feet with knees bent.
- Jump high, clap hands behind back.
- Jump high, clap hands over head, then behind back.
- Jump high, clap hands under one leg.
- Jump and turn halfway around.
- Jump and make a full turn before landing.
- Jump and click heels in the air.
- Jump as high as you can, as far as you can, and as quietly as you can.
- Jump backward.

2. Moving Your Body

- Make yourself as big as you can.
- Make yourself as small as you can.
- Make yourself as wide as you can.
- Make yourself as long as you can.
- Make your body as straight as you can.
- Make your body as curvy as you can.
- Walk on the line (taped to the floor) with your hands out for balance.
- Walk on the line without using your hands for balance.
- Walk the line backward with your hands out for balance.
- Hop from one end of the line to the other.
- Touch your nose with your left hand while grabbing your left ear with your right hand.
- Touch your nose with your right hand while grabbing your right ear with your left hand.

3. Throwing and Catching Bean Bags

- Throw the bean bag in the air and catch it with both hands, ten times.
- Throw the bean bag in the air and catch it with your right hand, five times.
- Throw the bean bag in the air and catch it with your left hand, five times.
- Throw the bean bag from one hand to the other, from left to right over your head.
- Throw the bean bag in the air; jump to catch it with two hands; then with one hand.
- Throw the bean bag in the air and clap your hands three times before catching it.
- Throw the bean bag in the air and turn all the way around before catching it.
- Stand with the bean bag balanced on one foot; try the other foot.
- Hop around with the bean bag balanced on one foot; try the other foot.

4. Using Hula Hoops

- Put the hoop over your head with hands at your sides; shake the hoop down over your body to the floor.
- Place the hoop on your right arm and make big circles with your arm; repeat with your left arm.
- Hold the hoop with two hands close to the floor; jump into the hoop with both feet and lift it over your head.
- Place the hoop over your right ankle; balance with the hoop off the floor while counting to ten. Repeat with your left ankle.
- Place the hoop over your right ankle, toe pointing up, hands on hips. While balancing, twirl the hoop. Repeat with your left ankle.
- Place the hoop on the floor and stand inside; jump out of the hoop and back inside, each time leaving the hoop at a different place.
- Stand in the center of the hoop, jump up and click your heels, and land in the center of the hoop, five times.
- Stand in the hoop and do ten jumping jacks without touching the sides.

5. Throwing and Catching Balls

- Hold the ball in both hands, throw it in the air and catch it.
- Hold the ball in your left hand, throw it in the air and catch it. Repeat with right hand.
- Throw the ball in the air, clap hands, then catch it.
- Throw the ball at the wall; catch it on its rebound before it hits the ground.
- Throw the ball at the wall, let it bounce once, then catch it.
- Throw the ball at the wall, turn around, and catch the ball on the first bounce.
- Dribble the ball with your right hand. Repeat with your left hand.
- Dribble the ball balancing on one foot. Repeat with the other foot.
- Dribble the ball down the line (taped on the floor) and back.
- Sit down, legs spread apart, and dribble the ball in between legs.
- Lie down on your back, throw the ball up in the air, and catch it.

6. Throwing and Catching Balloons

- Keep the balloon in the air with these parts of your body:

  left hand, right hand, both hands
  head, nose, shoulders
  elbows, hips, knees
  feet, back, stomach

- Sit down and keep the balloon in the air using just your hands, feet, head.
- Lying down, keep the balloon in the air using just your hands, feet, head.
- Kick the balloon from Point A to Point B (marked on the floor).
- Blow the balloon from A to B. Push it with your head from A to B.

7. Hopping

- Hop on both feet ten times.
- Hop on your left foot ten times, then your right foot ten times.
- Hop in a circle three times.
- Hop on both feet down the line (taped to the floor) and back.
- Hop on your left foot down the line, then come back hopping on the right foot.
- Hop on both feet, clapping each time your feet hit the ground.
- Hop on both feet sideways to the left, then back to the right.
- Hop on both feet while bouncing a ball in front of you.
- Hop on both feet backward down the line and back.
- Write your name on the floor by hopping out the letters.
- Hop as fast as you can, as slowly as you can, and as quietly as you can.

8. Jump Roping

- Spread the rope in a line on the floor; walk along the rope and back.
- Walk along the rope and back by sideways steps.
- Stand facing the rope and jump forward and backward over the rope.
- Stand beside the rope; jump back and forth over the rope until you get to the end.
- Pick up the rope, then jump rope ten times.
- Jump rope with your left foot only, ten times.
- Jump rope with your right foot only, ten times.
- Jump rope as fast as you can.
- Jump rope down the line (on the floor) and back.
- Jump rope with a friend as many times as you can.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on a child who is sometimes reluctant to participate in physical activities. Ask the child if he or she would be willing to keep a fitness record for three days; then develop a plan for participating in physical activities. Explain you will keep your own fitness record and develop a plan, too. Give the child a copy of the example that follows before you begin. Read the example together to make sure the child understands how to record his or her physical activities.

Begin by recording your fitness activities for three days. At the end of the third day, meet with the child to discuss your fitness records. You and the child answer the questions provided, then develop fitness plans to be carried out over the next week.

At the end of the week meet with the child to discuss what happened.

There are blank forms for both you and the child.

Child's Individual Fitness Record and Plan

(Example)

Name: *Mark* **Age:** *8 years* **Date:** *October 12-14*

Fitness Record

Record your physical activities for each day.

Day One

Climbed on jungle gym, played catch with Jason, had P.E. at school.

Day Two

Jogged around the field five times with the Jogging Club.

Day Three

Played dodge ball.

Review your fitness record. What have you learned about yourself?

I don't like organized games very much. I'm not very good at sports. I like the Jogging Club.

Fitness Plan

List some physical activities you could do at home:

Take my dog for longer walks.
Ride my bike.
Rollerblade.

List some physical activities you could do at school:

Join in games at recess.

List some physical activities you could do at the program:

Continue jogging but do it more often.
Try the movement stations to see if I like them.
Participate in the soccer clinic, maybe start playing in soccer games.

Try out your plans for a week. Then meet with your fitness partner to discuss what happened.

Staff Member's Fitness Record and Plan

(Example)

Name: *Ms. Jenssen* **Date:** *October 12-14*

Fitness Record

Record your physical activities for each day.

Day One

Used my 20-minute workout video at home.

Day Two

Jogged with the Jogging Club.

Day Three

Played games with the children.

Review your fitness record. What have you learned about yourself?

I like getting up early to use the 20-minute workout video. It gives me extra energy.

Fitness Plan

List some physical activities you could do at home:

Use the 20 minute workout video every other day.

Walk rather than using my car whenever I can.

List some physical activities you could do at the program:

Continue leading and participating in the children's physical activities.

Try out your plans for a week. Then meet with your fitness partner to discuss what happened.

What Happened?

Child: *Mark*

The soccer clinic was a lot of fun. I am going to start playing soccer.

I didn't really like the movement stations. I didn't understand the directions.

I've been jogging almost every day. I feel great.

Staff member: *Ms. Jenssen*

I've been keeping up with my fitness plans, too. And I feel great, just like Mark does!

Plan for Encouraging Physical Development

The program can provide more clinics such as the soccer clinic where children can learn the rules and basic skills used for a sport.

Mark can ask a staff member to show him how to use the movement stations. I will rewrite the instructions to make sure they are clear.

Staff can continue encouraging Mark and noting his efforts.

Mark would like to try the 20-minute workout video. I said I would bring it in so he can watch it. If he is interested, I will help him start an Aerobics Club.

Child's Individual Fitness Record and Plan

Name: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

Fitness Record

Record your physical activities for each day.

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Review your fitness record. What have you learned about yourself?

Fitness Plan

List some physical activities you could do at home:

List some physical activities you could do at school:

List some physical activities you could do at the program:

Try out your plans for a week. Then meet with your fitness partner to discuss what happened.

Staff Member's Fitness Record and Plan

Name: ____________________ **Date:** ____________________

Fitness Record

Record your physical activities for each day.

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Review your fitness record. What have you learned about yourself?

Fitness Plan

List some physical activities you could do at home:

____

____

____

List some physical activities you could do at the program:

____

____

____

Try out your plans for a week. Then meet with your fitness partner to discuss what happened.

What Happened?

Child: ______________________________

Staff member: ______________________________

Plan for Encouraging Physical Development

Discuss this activity with your trainer and with your colleagues.

Learning Activity IV.

Using the Environment to Encourage Fine Motor Skills

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- provide materials in each interest area that allow children to use fine motor skills; and
- review the program's materials to make sure they challenge and encourage children to further develop their fine motor skills.

Materials in each interest area can encourage children to use their fine motor skills.

In the school-age years children use their fine motor skills in many different ways—at home as they get dressed or comb their hair; at school as they write, draw, use computers, or conduct a science experiment; and while participating in a variety of activities at the school-age program. Many interest areas can give children opportunities to use their fine motor skills.

The types of materials you provide will vary according to the ages of the children in your program and their strengths, needs, and interests. Children who have had many opportunities to use their small muscles can usually have success with more challenging learning materials and equipment than can children with limited experiences. It is important to observe children using the materials so you will know when it is time to offer more challenging items and activities.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on how the environment provides opportunities for children to develop and practice fine motor skills. The chart on the following pages lists examples of how children use fine motor skills in the different interest areas. (See Module 3, Program Environment, for a discussion of interest areas.) As you review the chart, add more examples of ways in which the interest areas in your program can offer children opportunities to use their fine motor skills.

Using Fine Motor Skills

Interest Area	What Children Can Do
Quiet Area	*Draw and write with pencils, pens, and crayons* *Use a computer keyboard and mouse* *Turn pages of a magazine or book*
Dramatic Play Area	*Make puppets* *Put on costumes* *Use props*
Arts and Crafts Area	*Thread needles* *Use calligraphy pens* *Mold clay*
Sand and Water Table Area	*Pour water or sand through a funnel into a container* *Use a baster or eye dropper* *Tie the strings on a waterproof apron*

Using Fine Motor Skills
(continued)

Interest Area	What Children Can Do
Science and Nature Area	*Use tools to take apart a clock* *Hold a hand lens over a leaf* *Pour food into pet dishes*
Woodworking Area	*Hang tools on a pegboard* *Glue a dowel into a hole* *Use a ruler to measure a board*
Music Area	*Put a tape in the player* *Pluck a ukulele* *Shake a tambourine*
Blocks and Construction Area	*Build with Lincoln Logs* *Take apart Legos* *Tape fabric to a table to make a house*

Using Fine Motor Skills
(continued)

Interest Area	What Children Can Do
Board and Table Games Area	*Play pick-up sticks* *Do a puzzle* *Play checkers*
Math Area	*Make a design with pegs on a pegboard* *Use a calculator* *Write math problems*
Outdoors	*Draw hopscotch squares* *Paint at an easel* *Make snowballs*

Discuss this activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity V.

Helping Children Develop Positive Self-Concepts Through Physical Development

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize how physical development helps children develop socially and emotionally; and
- interact with children in ways that encourage a positive self-concept.

Physical development plays an important role in helping children feel good about themselves. When a child learns to pitch a ball, jump a distance, or build a geodesic dome with straws, the sense of accomplishment is enormous. The pride that comes from mastering physical skills helps children feel good about themselves. This sense of confidence and competence leads to emotional security and a willingness to risk learning difficult cognitive tasks. Thus, physical development affects children's growth in all areas and situations.

Encouraging Positive Self-Concepts Through Interactions With Children

Most children will eventually develop physical skills on their own; however, they may not feel proud of their accomplishments if they receive no encouragement or support for their efforts. This is especially true if children are slower to develop than their peers or feel pressure from adults. Your encouragement is therefore crucial to ensuring a sense of success. Here are some ways to provide encouragement. Add your own suggestion in the space provided.

Review for children how to do an activity right before they try it. "Before you do your long jump, swing your arms back and forth and bend your knees up and down. Imagine yourself in flight. Take a deep breath and jump as far as you can."

Verbally reassure a child who is reluctant or frightened. "I know you had a nasty fall last week when you were roller skating. Even though you were wearing safety equipment, it was scary. When you're ready to try again, would you like me to help you get started?"

Praise a child for trying something new. "I watched you hang upside down on the monkey bars today. Was that the first time you let go and hung by your legs?"

Suggest how a child can overcome an obstacle. "Before you cut out the eyes on your mask, put the bag on and ask a friend to mark where the holes for your eyes need to be."

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When encouraging children, be sure to let them know you are praising them for their efforts—not how they stack up next to other children or standards. "I was watching you do handstands, today. You've really learned to keep your legs steady and straight." Children need to be made to feel important in their own right, not for meeting set measures of success. As always, it's important to be genuine in your praise. If praise comes too often and is vague, it loses its value. On the other hand, sincere praise can make a child feel good and try harder.

Playing Cooperative Games[7]

Playing cooperative games is another way children can develop positive self-concepts through physical activities. When children play cooperative games, everybody works together, everybody wins, and nobody loses. Children can play with rather than against each other. They don't worry about how well they will perform and they don't worry about failing. Instead, children focus on having fun during the game.

There are four essential elements to cooperative games:

Cooperation. Children learn to share, empathize, pay attention to each other's feelings, and work together toward a common end.

Acceptance. Each child has a meaningful role within the game and is partially responsible for the success of the group.

Involvement. Children feel a sense of belonging, contribution, and satisfaction because they are part of the action.

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[7] Based with permission on Terry Orlick, *Cooperative Sports and Games Book* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1978).

Fun. Children are free to have a good time without fear of failure or rejection. No matter what their skill level, they can enjoy the game and feel good about their involvement.

Try these cooperative games with children ages 5 to 7.

The following are examples of cooperative games children ages 5 to 7 usually enjoy.

Cooperative Musical Hula Hoops. This game is a variation of musical chairs. Have several children lay some hoops on the floor. When everyone is ready, turn on a music tape. Stop the music and ask children to hurry to get inside a hoop. Every time the music stops, a hoop is removed. The children have to work together to find room in the remaining hoops for everyone.

As an alternative, pairs of children can stand in a hoop, each holding up half of the hoop at waist level. As the music plays, the pairs of children skip around the room wearing their hoops. Each pair has to move in the same direction and at the same pace. When the music stops, two pairs have to combine in a single hoop. Turn on the music again. Next time it stops, the groups of four have to combine so there will be eight children per hoop. This involves lots of wiggling and giggling.

Big Turtle. Picture seven or eight children on their hands and knees under a "shell" trying to move in one direction. You're watching the game Big Turtle! Use a gym mat, large sheet of cardboard, or blanket as the shell. The children have to work together to get going in the same direction. An added challenge is to try to get the turtle over a mountain (a bench) or through an obstacle course (large cardboard boxes) without losing their shell.

Wagon Wheels. Have seven or eight children face each other and join hands to make a circle—this is the wagon wheel. Have the wheel move as a circle around the walls of the gym. As the wheel spins, two to three children at a time will have their backs touching the wall. Children can put the wagon wheel in reverse, change the speed limit, or become a hubcap. To do this, one child lets go and begins turning inside the circle. As he or she turns, the others follow. The circle keeps coiling until everyone still holding hands is wrapped into a human hub.

Big Snake. For this game, each child needs a partner. One child lies down on her stomach. Her partner lies down behind her and holds her ankles, making a two-person snake. Each snake slithers to another snake and joins together to make a four-person snake, then an eight-person snake. Snakes can try to turn over without coming apart or to move though obstacles.

Toesies. Partners lie on their backs or stomachs on the floor, touching feet to feet. They then try to roll across the floor keeping toes touched throughout. Variations include touching one foot or the other, touching feet while sitting, or touching feet with legs criss-crossed.

Grasshopper. Have eight to ten children stand around the edges of a blanket. Place a beach ball (the grasshopper) in the center of the blanket. Ask the children to pick up the blanket and try to make the grasshopper hop high in the air and back on the blanket without falling on the floor. A variation is to cut a hole in the blanket big enough for the ball to fall through. Ask the children if they can get the ball to pass through the hole or jump into the air and go through the hole.

The following are examples of cooperative games children ages 8 and up usually enjoy. They are also fun to play at family picnics or other events.

Try these cooperative games with children ages 8 and up.

Long, Long Jump. The objective of this game is for a group of children to jump collectively as far as possible. The first child begins at the starting line and makes a jump. The next player begins to jump where the other child landed. This game can be played indoors or outdoors, backward or forward, standing or running, hopping, skipping, or jumping. Each group can try to exceed the previous record set by an earlier group.

Collective Blanketball. Have children form two teams of eight to ten each. Spread out two blankets, one for each team. Have each team grasp the edges of its blanket. Place a beach ball in the middle of one blanket. To warm up, children can toss the ball into the air and catch it again or roll it around the inside edges of the blanket. Children can then pass the ball back and forward by tossing it in unison toward the receiving team. An alternative is to toss the ball straight up in the air so the other team has to run together to catch it. You can also use two balls—each team tosses their ball at the same time to the other team.

All-On-One-Side Volleyball. This version of volleyball is played with all the players (four to five children) on one side using a balloon or beach ball instead of a volleyball. A player volleys the ball to a teammate, then goes under the net to other side. The next player does the same thing. The last player to touch the ball taps it over the net and then scoots under. The object is to get all the players on the other side as many times as possible during the game.

Collective Stone. In this game there are no losers, just players involved in batting, fielding, and scoring. First, spread four or five bases on a field or floor. One person starts at home plate and propels (kicks, bats, or throws) an object (ball, puck, beanbag, Frisbee, or water balloon) into the field of play. This player then runs around the bases as quickly as possible. Players have to circle around each base, but they don't have to touch them. The fielders try to retrieve the object. The player who retrieves the object has to pass it to all the other fielders. When the last fielder gets the object, he or she yells "stone." The person who propelled the object must stop immediately (stone cold), even if between bases. Runners who have been "stoned" can continue around the bases after the next person up propels an object. Every time someone completes a circuit around the bases, they score. The game continues until the collective score equals the number of players—this should mean everyone has scored.

Players can vary the distance between bases and the number of bases to reflect their skill levels and the number of children playing. Fielders can all run to the object and quickly pass it to one another; stay in position with the closest person getting the object and throwing it to another; all run to the object, form a line, and pass the object under their legs; or make up another interesting way to play the game.

Shake the Snake. In this game, half the players are shakers and half stompers. Shakers hold eight-foot ropes between their thumbs and first fingers. They wiggle the rope so the end drags along the floor as they are running across the floor or field. Stompers try to step on the rope, thereby pulling it from the shaker's fingers. Once a stomper succeeds, the stomper and the shaker reverse roles. If the group is an uneven number, there can be more stompers than shakers.

You can adapt familiar games to make them cooperative.

Introduce children to these variations on popular games.

- Play softball by pitching to your own team, allowing unlimited pitches in which to hit the ball, and allowing every batter to have a turn at bat in every inning. This makes the game interesting for all the players and ensures every player will get a hit.
- Play basketball with no foul shots. You can also require that the ball be passed and touched by all members on the team before shooting. Foul shots slow down the game, so eliminating them makes the game more active. Having all players touch the ball encourages teamwork and cooperation.

- Play volleyball by rotating servers to the other team, allowing players to touch the net, and allowing players to hit the ball twice in a row. This makes it easier for younger children to play along with older ones.
- Play soccer in the "all score" version—everyone has to make a goal before the team can win. This encourages children to involve all players in the action.
- Play any game by rotating the positions. This allows all players to have a turn at different positions and encourages greater skill development. (If you're always positioned out in right field, you're not likely to have too many opportunities to learn to catch a ball.)

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you select a cooperative game to introduce to children in your program. You can focus on one age group or try a game with a mixed age group. Introduce the game, watch the children play, and write down what happened on the form provided. Begin by reading the example on the next page.

Playing a Cooperative Game
(Example)

Age Group: *Mostly 6- and 7-year olds*

Date: *February 8*

Game: *Big Turtle*

Setting: *Gymnasium*

How did you introduce the game?

I described the game, then I asked for two volunteers to demonstrate. Nicky and Erica said they would try it. I had them get down on their hands and knees and placed a large sheet of cardboard on top of them. They tried moving across the gym. Nicky said, "This is fun." Erica just giggled.

What did the children do?

The rest of the kids wanted a turn, so we started over with everyone under the cardboard. I said "Ready, set, go!" Some tried moving forward, some backward. Nicky suggested they all try going forward toward the bleachers. They had a hard time moving without the board falling off. Several times I heard children saying, "Slow down, you're making it fall off." The children on the sides reached up to steady the cardboard.

How did this game encourage self-esteem?

When they got to the bleachers, they all stood up and shouted, "We did it!" I could tell they all felt good about working together. They immediately wanted to do it again. Francie asked to be in the front. She said, "I'm not very big, so I make a good turtle head. I'll let everyone know when we're heading the wrong way."

Would you play this same game again? What changes would you make?

I asked the children if they would like to play again. Most said yes. Next time we could set up some obstacles or use the timer to see how long it takes to get from one point to another.

Playing a Cooperative Game

Age Group: ____________________ Date: ____________________

Game: ____________________ Setting: ____________________

How did you introduce the game?

What did the children do?

How did this game encourage self-esteem?

Would you play this same game again? What changes would you make?

Review your responses with your trainer. See the Bibliography for resources on cooperative games.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for promoting children's physical development. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Promoting Children's Physical Development

Reinforcing and Encouraging Physical Development Through an Appropriate Environment, Activities, and Interactions

1. **What did Mr. Brody do to encourage the children's physical development?**
   a. He suggested the children bring up their idea for a sock hop at the next group meeting.
   b. He asked Sandra if her mother might be willing to teach the children some dances.
   c. He helped Sandra get her knitting back on the needles.
2. **Why did Mr. Brody suggest the children bring up their idea at the next group meeting?**
   a. He wanted to encourage the children to make their own plans for the sock hop.
   b. He knew more children needed to be involved to make the sock hop successful.

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Gross Motor Development

1. **Why did Ms. Tunis set up the movement stations?**
   a. The movement stations can help children practice specific skills.
   b. Children can use the movement stations independently according to their own needs and interests.
2. **How did Ms. Tunis support Renaldo's development of gross motor skills?**
   a. She suggested movement stations that would be good for developing skills used in basketball.
   b. She sincerely complimented him on his ball-handling skills.
   c. She suggested he take a break and get a drink of water so he wouldn't get overheated.

Providing Equipment and Opportunities for Fine Motor Development

1. **How did Mr. Shepard accommodate the different skill levels of the children?**

   He suggested a similar game that could be played by children who might not be ready to play regular jacks.

2. **How did Mr. Shepard encourage the fine motor development of Charles and Dana?**

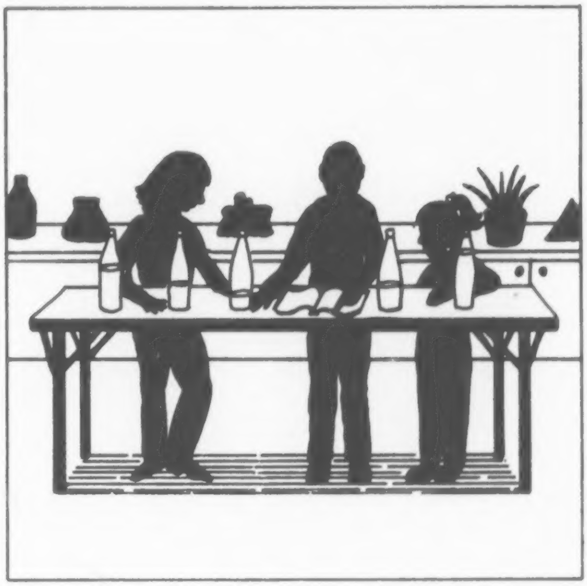
   a. He stepped in to suggest a game they might enjoy.

   b. He taught them how to play the game.

   c. He stepped back to let them play the game by themselves.

GLOSSARY

Eye-hand coordination	The ability to direct finger, hand, and wrist movements to accomplish a fine motor task—for example, fitting a piece in a puzzle or threading a needle.
Fine motor skills	Movements that involve the use of small muscles of the body, hands, and wrists—for example, picking up shells in the science area or cutting with a pair of scissors.
Gross motor skills	Movements that involve the use of large muscles of the body, the entire body, or large parts of the body—for example, running, cycling, or climbing.
Physical development	The gradual gaining of control over large and small muscles.
Sensory awareness	The gaining of information through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—for example, smelling spices or turning in the direction of a voice.



Module 5:

COGNITIVE

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OVERVIEW

GUIDING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT INVOLVES:

- creating a varied environment that encourages children to experiment and make discoveries;
- interacting with children in ways that build on their natural curiosity; and
- providing opportunities for children to use their growing skills.

Cognitive development is the process of learning to think and to reason. We have learned a great deal about children's cognitive development from the work of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Howard Gardner.

Piaget taught us that children think differently from adults.

Piaget defined the stages of thinking that children progress through from birth to maturity. Through his research, he noticed children think differently at each stage of development. For example, Piaget noticed young preschoolers think that a tall, thin glass can hold more water than a short, wide one—even when they see identical amounts of water poured into both glasses. This is because young children tend to focus on one feature of an object at a time—in this case, the height of the glass and not its width. By about age 6 or 7, though, children come to understand that the amount of water in both types of glasses is the same. This understanding comes when children are old enough to be able to think more abstractly and after they have had many experiences with water and other liquids. It is through their interactions with real objects and materials, according to Piaget, that children grow cognitively.

Vygotsky explained how adults facilitate and guide children's learning.

Vygotsky's theories show us children learn best through social interactions with other children and adults; children need adults and "competent peers" to support their initial learning. Competent peers are children who already know what is being learned. Vygotsky compares this support to the scaffolding placed around new buildings as they are erected. This scaffolding provides a framework in which children can use their cognitive skills on their own. Vygotsky sees the role of adults as facilitators and guides, rather than as transmitters of knowledge.

Gardner defined seven types of intelligence.

Recent research in how humans learn to think has led to an expanded definition of intelligence. Howard Gardner explains that intelligence is more than just verbal and math skills. Each child's abilities are unique, and may be described in terms of potential for achievement in seven areas. These areas, or multiple intelligences, are described by Gardner as follows:[1]

1. **Logical**—analysis and mathematical reasoning. Children who have strong potential in this area might be outstanding chess players, solve difficult brain teasers, or easily calculate how to double a recipe or how much string is needed to set up a loom.
2. **Linguistic**—appreciating the rhythms and meanings of words and using language well. Children who have strong potential in this area might write poems and plays, develop large vocabularies, or read a wide variety of books.
3. **Musical**—appreciating different forms of music and producing and appreciating rhythm, pitch, and timbre. Children who have strong potential in this area might easily recognize the instruments in a piece of music, sing in harmony with others, or enjoy many kinds of music, from classical to popular.
4. **Spatial**—accurately seeing the physical world and being able to understand and make changes in it, as in the visual arts. Children who have strong potential in this area might construct complex block structures, plan and create three-dimensional structures, or paint an elaborate mural.
5. **Bodily Kinesthetic**—using the whole body, including both fine and gross motor skills to solve problems and create products. Children who have strong potential in this area might excel in dance or gymnastics, take apart and rebuild a radio or clock, or invent a squirrel-proof birdfeeder.
6. **Interpersonal**—understanding and responding appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and desires of other people. Children who have strong potential in this area might mediate conflicts between other children, show a younger child how to do something, or organize the group to perform a talent show.
7. **Intrapersonal**—knowing one's strengths, weaknesses, desires, and intelligences, and using the knowledge productively. Children who have a strong potential in this area might write an autobiography, set and pursue long term goals, or give advice to a friend on how to handle a difficult personal problem.

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[1] Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) as described in *Constructing Curriculum for the Primary Grades*, Diane Trister Dodge, Judy R. Jablon, and Toni S. Bickart (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1994).

Gardner's work shows the importance of looking at each child as an individual, with specific areas of strength. As Peter Jennings stated in an ABC broadcast (January 23, 1992) on education, instead of asking "How smart is this child?" it is more important to ask "How is this child smart?" By answering this second question, you focus on each child's strengths and can then plan activities and experiences that will inspire a child.

Thus, to combine and summarize the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Gardner, children develop cognitive skills by continually exploring and investigating everything around them. You have undoubtedly experienced how curious school-age children are. They want to know how magnets work, what causes lightning, and why the days get shorter in winter. They are constantly investigating and solving problems, continually on a quest for answers to the questions that sprout from their minds.

Self-confidence is an important part of cognitive development.

Children's cognitive development is not merely the sum of the information they know. Equally important is how children approach learning and thinking. To grow cognitively, children need to have the self-confidence and skills to explore, try out ideas, make mistakes, solve problems, and take on new challenges. Helping children develop and use their cognitive skills is an important part of your job. If you help children to see themselves as good learners, you will help them succeed in school and in life.

School-age staff have a special opportunity to guide children's thinking and reasoning. Helping children to develop cognitively doesn't mean focusing on homework or making the school-age program an extension of school. Facilitating children's cognitive development is worlds apart from giving them worksheets, assignments, and drill-and-practice. Rather, it is an opportunity to encourage children's inborn needs to learn, to think, to reason, to question, and to experiment.

Most children are eager to explore the world around them and find out how things work. They want to explore the things they see in the world around them. You can build on this natural curiosity to guide children's cognitive development. First, you can create an environment that encourages children to experiment and make discoveries. Second, you can ask questions and talk with children in ways that build on their natural curiosity. Third, you can provide opportunities for children to use their growing skills.

Listed on the following page are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in guiding children's cognitive development.

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Experiment and Make Discoveries

Supply materials that enable children to pursue and develop special talents for example, in art, design, music, athletics, science, and the culinary arts. "Denise, the calligraphy pens we ordered have arrived. Would you like to use them after school?"

Offer children space and time to develop and carry out their plans. "Jacques, you and Kendrick have been making some interesting structures out of Legos lately. Would you like to draw up some plans for building your own Legoland? We could set aside part of the construction area just for you two."

Create discovery boxes on topics such as magnets, static electricity, solar energy, and weather for children to use on their own or in small groups. "Ellen and Casey, now you are experts on solar energy, can you tell us how we're going to keep our houses warm in the future?"

Offer a wide range of books and magazines that reflect children's diverse interests and vary these resources to match children's changing interests and growing skills. "Laura if you want to know which dinosaurs were meat-eaters, you can look it up in the new dinosaur book in our library."

Provide open-ended materials that children can explore and use in many different ways. "Kara, I've noticed you like taking things apart. Someone gave us an old radio. Since it doesn't work any more, you could take it apart to see what's inside."

Provide materials that help children learn to classify, sequence, and understand cause and effect. "John, tell me about your experiment growing onions. Why do you think these three plants look so different from each other?"

Interacting With Children in Ways That Build on Their Natural Curiosity

Accept and respect children's ideas, suggestions, and solutions. "Devorah, that was a great idea to draw a picture of the rug you want to weave before you set up the loom. You were able to set aside enough yarn in the colors you need to carry out your plans."

Ask recall questions to help children describe what they already know, remember past events, and understand how what happened in the past relates to what's happening now. "Remember when we tried to grow tomatoes earlier this year and they all got big black spots? We looked it up and the gardening guide said something was missing from our soil. What do we need to add to the soil this year so the tomatoes will be healthy and edible?"

Ask questions to help children think about cause and effect or to make predictions (convergent). "So, you think there are 100 marbles in the jar because you counted the ones you could see on the top (10), then multiplied by how many layers (10) you think are in the jar. Without counting the marbles, what other ways could you estimate the number?"

Ask questions that encourage children to come up with several possible ideas or solutions (divergent). "I've noticed the prop boxes aren't used very often. Can you think of some themes for new prop boxes or some things to add to the ones we have to make them more interesting?"

Ask questions that encourage children to make a judgment (evaluative). "What would you do if you saw a friend do something dangerous?"

Expose children to new information, ideas, concepts, and experiences. "The city has a new recycling law and we need to begin separating our recyclable paper, plastic, and metal materials and containers. How can we make sure we know what's recyclable and remember to put them in the right bin?"

Talk to and question children about what they are observing and learning. "You're right Tim, geese flew over our playground every day this week. Where do you think they're going?"

Encourage children to make decisions and solve their own problems without adult assistance. "Sammy and Hannah, I'm sure you can work out a way to share the stethoscope in the health clinic prop box so you can both have a good time."

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Growing Skills

Encourage children's emerging sense of humor by suggesting they write and share riddles, jokes, and limericks. "Pedro, you've written a lot of funny limericks. Would you like to type them up on the computer and make a book? "

Involve children in planning and evaluating the program's routines and activities. "It's time to develop the menus for next month's snack. You can either come to the meeting this afternoon or write down your suggestions and put them in the box."

Plan activities that allow children to explore natural science and the outdoor environment. "The Nature Club will meet on Tuesday afternoon. We're going on a swamp walk, so wear your boots. We'll bring along a tape player to record swamp sounds."

Provide opportunities for children to participate in and learn about the real world—locally, within the state, nationally, or internationally. "The skits you made up were really funny. Would you like to perform them for hospitalized children?"

Follow a schedule that allows children to choose what they want to do and provides sufficient time for their long-term projects. "Emily has been keeping a weather journal of the temperature highs and lows, precipitation (rain and snow), and barometric pressure. Each day she notes how sunny or cloudy it is and predicts what it will be like the next day."

Involve children in setting rules and establishing procedures for the program's operations. "Now that the warmer weather is here children can choose to play outdoors during the free choice periods. We need a system for keeping track of who's inside and who's outdoors. Do you have any suggestions?"

Allow children plenty of time to talk to each other and to the staff. "You two don't have to stop your conversation but when you're through, could you help us get ready to go outside?"

Provide opportunities for children to demonstrate their growing cognitive skills and apply them to new situations. "Laura and Hank, you've been reading lots of books about dinosaurs. What are some ways you could share what you learned with the rest of us?"

Introduce children to the steps in problem solving. "Polly, now that you've made your prediction, conducted your experiment, and observed the results, what are your conclusions?"

Provide children with opportunities to learn in ways that match their learning style. "David, I know you enjoy talking things through. Why don't you record the story about the tournament using the tape recorder and then type it up for the newspaper?"

Guiding Children's Cognitive Development

In the following situations, school-age staff are guiding children's cognitive development. As you read each one, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Experiment and Make Discoveries

Rita comes bounding into the program calling, "Victor, Victor, I got a letter from my pen pal, just like you said I would!" Mr. Crain looks up from his Parcheesi game and says, "I'm over here. Come tell me all about it." "Well," starts an out-of-breath Rita, "her name is Katerina and she's 11, too, and she has two brothers, one older and one younger, and she lives in a small apartment in Moscow and she wants to be a doctor and she was thrilled to hear from me." Mr. Crain smiles, "She sounds very similar to a girl I know." "Yeah," responds Rita. "I couldn't believe it. Maybe she wants to be a pediatrician too." "What else did she tell you about her life in Russia?" asks Mr. Crain. "She said she has to wear lots of sweaters to keep warm in their apartment—they don't have much heat. She goes to an all-girls school, but she likes a boy who lives next door and is friends with her brother." Mr. Crain smiles as he listens, then adds, "Have you written back already? It would be just like you to sit down and respond immediately so you could get another letter from Katerina as quickly as possible." "Not yet," laughs Rita. "I'll write to her this afternoon. Maybe when Jocelyn and Danica see my letter they'll want to get their own pen pals." "Sounds like a good plan," says Mr. Crain. "I'll post the address for the pen pal organization that pairs American children with children from other countries on the bulletin board."

1. **How did Mr. Crain encourage Rita to experiment and make discoveries?**

2. **What did Rita learn from becoming a pen pal?**

Interacting With Children in Ways That Build on Their Natural Curiosity

Seven-year-old Samantha recently went with her family to a planetarium. In discussing the visit with Ms. Williams, she blurts out, "I know why the stars shine at night. It's because we live inside the earth. When it's dark inside the earth, it's light outside. When we look out through the holes in the earth, we see the light of the stars." Ms. Williams immediately realizes Samantha has pieced together information about day and night and how light is viewed and then developed her own explanation about the stars. She holds back the temptation to provide Samantha with a "correct" explanation, and instead says, "That's a very interesting theory. Let's dig some holes in the ground so that we can see how your theory works."

1. Why did Ms. Williams not just give Samantha the correct facts?

2. How did Ms. Williams encourage Samantha to think through her theory?

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Growing Skills

Ten-year-old Brian was so excited about a recent camping trip that he decided to publish a book about it. For the last three days, after snack and a turn around the track with the Running Club, he diligently typed his story on the computer. Now that he's ready to illustrate his story, Brian seems troubled. Despite Ms. Saavedra's encouragement, Brian is dead set against using hand-drawn pictures. Even though he thinks his pictures look "okay," he says they will take away from the professional look of his story. "I wish there was some way I could draw on the computer screen," says Brian. "Then my drawings would look as good as my writing." "Well there is a way," says Ms. Saavedra. "Here are two drawing programs for the computer. You can experiment with them and see which looks the most professional to you. Both of the programs have built-in tutorials to help you use them. Plus, the users' manuals are in the library if you need them." After spending half an hour playing with the programs, Brian selects one that is object-oriented. By piecing together objects of differing shapes, sizes, and colors, Brian is able to create illustrations. Six illustrations later, Brian declares, "My book is finished."

1. How did Ms. Saavedra provide an opportunity for Brian to use his skills?

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3. How did Ms. Saavedra support Brian's mastery of new skills and concepts?

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Experiences with Learning

Learning is a lifelong experience.

Cognitive development continues throughout life. People don't stop learning when they leave school; they continue to refine their thinking and reasoning skills. You probably know people you feel are good learners and thinkers. Most likely, in many situations you think of yourself as a good learner. People who have confidence in their ability to learn generally have some of the following characteristics.

- They are not afraid to accept a challenge. "I don't know the answer but I'll find out."
- When they confront a problem, they don't give up if they can't resolve it right away. They try to figure out what to do. "I'm going to ask Mary's parents if anything is happening at home that might explain why she's suddenly become so aggressive."
- They are curious and interested in learning new things. "I hear that book is really interesting. I'd like to read it when you're finished."
- They are creative thinkers—they can look at something and see lots of possibilities. "I think that if I work a few extra hours on the weekend, I'll be able to take that class on Friday night."
- They speak up and say what they think. "I'm not sure I agree with you. Here's what I see happening."

We aren't all intelligent in the same ways.

We don't all have the same abilities, nor do we need to. An auto mechanic knows a lot about the parts of a car, what makes it go, and how to fix it. When there's a problem, the mechanic tries to figure out the cause. If you know very little about how a car operates, this doesn't make you less smart. You know other things the mechanic doesn't know. What's important is whether we each have the knowledge and skills to function in our lives.

Many factors affect our ability to learn something new. Most important is whether the new information is useful to us. If we can see a way to use what we are learning, we are likely to be more interested in putting forth the effort. It helps if the new information is related either to something we already know about or know how to do—or to something we've wanted to know for some time.

Learning style affects what we learn.

Each of us has a different style or way of learning that works best for us. Some need to read over directions and think about them for a while. Others prefer to watch someone else demonstrate a task, or need to hear directions explained a couple of times.

As an adult you are probably aware of what helps you learn a new skill or new idea. Think of a time recently when you were in a learning situation—for instance, learning to swim, taking an adult education course, or going through these modules. List some factors that helped you to learn in that situation.

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Many factors can affect our ability to learn.

Some factors that affect our ability to learn relate to the instructor or to the material itself: how the information is presented, how it is organized, and whether it is on our level. Our readiness to learn is also affected by how we feel at the time. If we are tired, distracted, uncomfortable, or unsure of what is expected of us, we are less likely to learn.

This training program is designed to help you learn new concepts and skills and feel good about yourself as a learner. The training design includes a number of strategies to make it a positive learning experience:

- The information is organized into individual modules so you won't be overwhelmed with too much information at once.
- All the modules relate to your work and should be immediately useful.
- There are many examples within each module to help you understand the content.
- Answer sheets, a colleague, or your trainer can give you feedback.
- You receive your own set of materials to keep as an ongoing reference on the job.
- You complete many of the learning activities with the children in your program.

As you enhance your skills and knowledge in ways that make you feel confident, you will be able to do the same thing for children. Like you, children learn best when they are interested in and ready to receive new information. They like to try out new ideas and discover what works and what doesn't on their own. As you go through these modules, you will try out many ideas and discover for yourself what approaches work best for you and for the children in your program.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module for definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to guide children's cognitive development. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the columns on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Experiment and Make Discoveries	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Supplying materials that allow children to pursue and develop special talents.	☐	☐	☐
2. Offering children space and time to develop and carry out their plans.	☐	☐	☐
3. Creating discovery boxes on topics such as magnets, static electricity, solar energy, and weather.	☐	☐	☐
4. Offering a wide range of books and magazines that reflect children's diverse interests.	☐	☐	☐
5. Providing open-ended materials that children can explore and use in many different ways.	☐	☐	☐
6. Providing materials that help children learn to classify, sequence, and understand cause and effect.	☐	☐	☐
Interacting With Children in Ways That Build on Their Natural Curiosity			
7. Accepting and respecting children's ideas, suggestions, and solutions.	☐	☐	☐
8. Asking recall questions to help children describe what they know, remember the past, and relate the past to the present.	☐	☐	☐
9. Asking convergent questions to help children think about cause and effect or to make predictions.	☐	☐	☐
10. Asking divergent questions so children can think of several possible ideas or solutions.	☐	☐	☐
11. Asking evaluative questions so children learn to make judgments.	☐	☐	☐

Interacting With Children in Ways That Build on Their Natural Curiosity (continued)		**I Do This**	
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
12. Exposing children to new information, ideas, concepts, and experiences.	☐	☐	☐
13. Talking to and questioning children about what they are observing and learning.	☐	☐	☐
14. Encouraging children to make decisions and solve problems on their own, without adult assistance.	☐	☐	☐
Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Growing Skills			
15. Encouraging children's emerging sense of humor by suggesting they write and share riddles, jokes, and limericks.	☐	☐	☐
16. Involving children in planning and evaluating the program's routines and activities.	☐	☐	☐
17. Planning activities that allow children to explore natural science and the outdoor environment.	☐	☐	☐
18. Providing opportunities for children to participate in and learn about the real world.	☐	☐	☐
19. Following a schedule that allows children to choose what they want to do and provides enough time for long-term projects.	☐	☐	☐
20. Involving children in setting rules and establishing procedures for the program's operations.	☐	☐	☐
21. Allowing children plenty of time to talk to each other and to the staff.	☐	☐	☐
22. Providing opportunities for children to demonstrate their growing cognitive skills and apply them to new situations.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Growing Skills (continued)	☐	☐	☐
23. Introducing children to the steps in problem solving.	☐	☐	☐
24. Providing opportunities for children to learn in ways that match their learning styles.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

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Begin the learning activities for Module 5, Cognitive.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Cognitive Development 311

II. Helping Children Understand the World 316

III. Asking Questions To Promote Children's Thinking Skills 322

IV. Using the Physical Environment to Promote Cognitive Development 328

V. Helping Children Learn to Solve Problems 336

Learning Activity I.

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Cognitive Development

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical thinking and reasoning behaviors of school-age children; and
- use what you know about school-age children to guide their cognitive development.

In the school-age years, children's thinking begins to resemble that of adults.

During the school-age years children begin to think in ways that are familiar to us as adults. They start to think and reason logically about objects and people in their environment. School-age children can readily order and organize things by size, color, volume, or tone. They understand substances remain the same even when their shape or physical arrangement changes. For example, they are no longer confused when a ball of clay is rolled into a long, snake shape. They realize that both shapes contain the same amount of clay.

School-age children are developing an appreciation of rules—in games, sports, clubs, and life—and typically they take great satisfaction in following rules to the letter. By about age 8 or 9, most children can differentiate between right and wrong. For the majority of children this means things are either "right" or "wrong" and there are no "gray" areas open to interpretation. Something is either "right" or it's not.

Older school-age children are able to think abstractly. This is quite a leap in learning from the preschooler who must see everything in concrete terms in order to learn. School-age children are now able to approach problems systematically. They are willing to consider a wide array of solutions to a problem before settling on an answer. They are comfortable using trial and error to solve problems. By the onset of adolescence, most children have become mature thinkers.

During these years, children increasingly focus on the skills they need for school and life. They enjoy working on real projects and making things. Some older children like competing—with other children and against themselves. Unlike younger children who are more interested in the process of creating rather than a finished product, most school-age children take deep satisfaction in seeing a project through to completion.

School-age children need the support and guidance of caring adults.

It's important to keep in mind that although children this age are capable, they are still children. They may not need guidance and attention to the same degree younger children do, but they need the support of caring adults. You can help school-age children develop and enhance their cognitive skills by providing a challenging environment and serving as their resource and guide.

Applying Your Knowledge

The charts which follow list some typical behaviors of children at ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12. Included are behaviors relevant to cognitive development. The right column asks you to identify ways staff can use this information to guide cognitive development. Try to think of as many examples as you can. As you work through the module, you will learn new strategies, and you can add them to the charts. You are not expected to think of all the examples at one time. If you need help getting started, turn to the completed charts at the end of the module. By the time you complete all the learning activities, you will find you have learned many ways to guide children's cognitive development.

As you complete the charts that follow, keep in mind that many of the examples of children's behavior and staff responses apply to more than one age group. Developmentally appropriate programs are based on a knowledge of child development and are responsive to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Therefore, it is important to observe children regularly and to use what you learn to individualize the program.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They are eager to learn the answers to "why" questions.	*Respect children's questions. Help them predict answers to their questions and test them out. Offer answers to stretch their thinking.*
They like to take on responsibility.	
They are developing an understanding of time, but the concepts of past and future are still vague.	
They are curious and want to explore many things.	
They express their thoughts and feelings—typically in great and vivid detail.	
They read and write simple words, sentences, and texts.	
They are beginning to understand number concepts and relationships but still need experiences with real objects to fully grasp them.	

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They like to collect and catalogue "things" such as coins, baseball cards, and rocks.	*Provide space and time for children to create displays of their collections. Use nature walks and field trips as opportunities to plan new collections. Share your own collections, for example, owls collected on trips to other countries.*
They are intrigued by how things relate to one another.	
They understand explanations and rules and enjoy following rules to the letter.	
They may be critical of their own performance and may need help sorting out realistic goals from unrealistic ones.	
They make step-by-step plans and carry them out.	
They work on projects over a long period of time.	
They vary greatly in academic abilities and interests.	
They ask many questions and want thoughtful answers in return.	

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They typically can think in abstract terms.	*Talk with children about current events and social issues such as recycling. Encourage children to make predictions about the future. If children are interested, help them organize a Futurists Club to learn more about what people think the world will be like when they are grownups.*
They are increasingly skilled in reading and writing.	
They use a systematic approach to solve problems.	
They add, subtract, multiply, and divide with growing skill.	
They are serious about working and learning.	
They show proficiency in particular skills and talents.	
They can appreciate other points of view.	

When you have completed as much as you can of these charts, discuss your answers with your trainer. As you do the rest of the learning activities, you can refer back to the charts and add more examples of how school-age staff guide children's cognitive development.

Learning Activity II.

Helping Children Understand Their World

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- observe how school-age children make sense of the world; and
- support children's cognitive growth throughout the learning cycle.

School-age children gradually learn to accept the expectations and standards of society.

Children have an inborn desire to make sense of the world in which they live. They first gain understanding by making sense of their own experiences. These personal interpretations give way to shared understandings of what they know and believe and how it fits into the way other people think. Consider this example. At age 7, Sarah writes stories using invented spelling. As she is exposed to books and print, she begins to modify the personal system she uses for spelling by incorporating "correct" spelling and grammar she has seen and heard repeatedly through books and in her classroom into her writing. Eventually Sarah uses conventional rules of spelling and grammar rather than her own system. This cycle of learning is a natural process which occurs over and over during one's lifetime. It takes place whenever we acquire a new skill or understanding.

The learning cycle includes four stages.

As described by Bredekamp and Rosegrant,[2] the learning cycle takes place in four stages:

1. **Awareness.** In this first stage of the learning cycle, we experience the skill or concept in a broad, general way.

> Matt watches children playing computer games, including one he has never tried. On several occasions he stands behind a group of children playing labyrinth and maze games. At this stage he is becoming aware of what it is he would like to learn.

2. **Exploration.** In this second stage we try to figure out the components of what it is we want to learn. Through observation and active use of all our senses we construct our own personal meanings.

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[2] Based on Sue Bredekamp and Teresa Rosegrant (Eds.), *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992), pp. 32–34.

> When no one else is at the computer, Matt tries playing the computer game on his own. Using the maze, he experiments with the cursor. Several times he causes the program to crash. Matt concludes the key to winning at the games is speed; he must move quickly or the programs will crash.

3. **Inquiry.** In the third stage, we compare the personal meanings we have developed with those held by others. In this stage we learn to adapt what we think to fit societal conventions.

> Matt asks some of the more experienced players if he can sit with them as they play. Keith responds to Matt's request and explains the strategies he uses. Matt asks Keith a number of questions. Keith responds both verbally and by demonstration. By watching Keith, Matt learns the program does not crash easily; Matt was making it crash by clicking on the mouse inappropriately. Matt also realizes succeeding at these games relies more on planning than it does on speed. Matt plays along with Keith. Then he plays on his own using the strategies he learned from Keith and others he developed based on what Keith had shown him.

4. **Utilization**. In this last stage, we apply what we've learned to real life situations.

> Matt confidently plays computer games on his own or with other children. He especially enjoys playing with Keith, who no longer needs to serve as a mentor. Matt is excited with his new proficiency and eagerly joins the Computer Games Club.

You can promote children's learning of both skills and knowledge by knowing these stages of the learning cycle and helping children progress through them.

Here are some strategies you might use to support children throughout the learning cycle:

Try these suggestions.

At the **awareness** stage, you can:

- establish interest areas and provide materials in response to children's skills, needs, and interests;
- introduce new materials and props;
- invite guest speakers and parents to discuss new ideas and concepts;
- pose problems for children to solve; and
- show interest in and enthusiasm for children's ideas.

At the **exploration** stage, you can:

- encourage active investigation and use of the environment;
- follow a schedule that allows children to choose what they want to do and what materials they want to use;
- extend children's imaginative and dramatic play;
- describe for children what they are doing;
- ask open-ended questions that encourage exploration and discovery;
- have children reflect on their activities and relate these to past experiences; and
- respect children's mistakes and help them learn from them.

At the **inquiry** stage, you can:

- focus children's attention on certain details or aspects of an object, topic, or idea;
- ask open-ended questions that focus children's attention on key characteristics or relationships;
- provide information upon request;
- expose children to accepted standards and beliefs;
- help children compare and contrast; and
- help children generalize and make connections.

At the **utilization** stage, you can:

- help children apply knowledge and skills to new situations;
- provide meaningful ways for children to apply their learning; and
- assist children in formulating new hypotheses (predictions about what might be the answer to a question or problem).

The learning cycle repeats itself.

Once children pass through the learning cycle, it begins again. With their newly acquired skills or knowledge, children are exposed to new skills and new knowledge; they enter the awareness stage again. For example, after Matt learned to play the labyrinth and maze games he became aware of other computer games and wanted to learn to play them. Learning is a dynamic process which, hopefully, never ends.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you complete observations of three children in your program: one age 5 to 7, one 8 to 10, and one 11 or 12. If you work with only one age group or do not have a full span of ages enrolled, conduct three representative observations. Observe each child as he or she works on an activity or interacts with another child or an adult. (Conducting and recording observations is covered in Module 12, Program Management. Refer to this module if you need to review this skill.)

As you complete your observations, ask yourself, "In what stage of the learning cycle is this child?" Then review your observation notes and complete the observation summary forms. It may take you a week or longer to finish your observations. Two examples are provided. A sample blank form follow the examples.

Observation Summary: Supporting Cognitive Growth Throughout the Learning Cycle

(Example 1)

Child: *Toni* **Age:** *5 1/2 years* **Date:** *June 8*

Briefly describe what you observed:

Toni and a group of children were feeding the fish in our aquarium. One child observed the water line in the tank was much lower than it was several weeks ago. The group agreed this was true. Toni offered an explanation: "The fish are drinking the water!"

In what stage of the learning cycle is this child? How do you know?

I think Toni is in the exploration stage. Based on her observations, she came up with an amusing—but logical—explanation for her observations.

What can you do to support this child's cognitive growth?

I thought Toni might learn from setting up an experiment to test her hypothesis that the fish are drinking the water. To do this, we decided to fill up a second tank, the same size as our aquarium. The second tank has no fish. Using a grease pencil, Toni marked the water level in both tanks. She'll check the water level of both tanks each day. She's sure the water in the second tank will not go down. I can't wait to see her reactions as the experiment progresses.

(Example 2)

Child: *Seth* **Age:** *12 years* **Date:** *June 9*

Briefly describe what you observed:

Seth is very interested in baseball cards. This afternoon he went through his cards, dividing them into three piles. I couldn't figure out what criteria he was using to sort his cards—they weren't grouped by teams, make of card, year, or anything I could think of. I asked Seth to tell me how he was sorting the cards. He said he was putting the cards into piles according to how much he thinks they are worth—one pile was for players he thought might someday get into the Hall of Fame, another was for cards in mint condition, and the third was for rookies with uncertain futures.

In what stage of the learning cycle is this child? How do you know?

Seth is able to categorize using abstract concepts—the potential value of the cards. This is an advanced way of thinking. It depends on making predictions about how much the cards will be worth in the future. I would say he is definitely in the utilization stage.

What can you do to support this child's cognitive growth?

I plan to build on Seth's interest in making money from his baseball cards by going to the library and checking out the latest issue of Becket's baseball card magazine which will give him information on the current value of his cards. I'll also suggest he make some graphs and bar charts on the computer to illustrate the value of his collection. He could then use his graphs and charts to help him decide whether to hold, sell, or trade specific cards. I'll ask him if he'd like to sponsor a card show. He and other interested children could swap cards and share their collections.

Observation Summary:
Supporting Cognitive Growth Throughout the Learning Cycle

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Briefly describe what you observed:

In what stage of the learning cycle is this child? How do you know?

What can you do to support this child's cognitive growth?

Use this form to document your observations. Make as many copies of it as you need. When you have completed three observations, discuss them with your trainer and your colleagues. Plan ways to continue supporting children's cognitive development.

Learning Activity III.
Asking Questions To Promote Children's Thinking Skills

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the skills children use in learning; and
- ask questions that help children expand their thinking skills.

Children need to feel good about learning.

There is an endless amount of information school-age children can learn. As important as what children learn, however, is whether they are "learning how to learn" and whether they feel good about their ability to learn. Some of the thinking skills children develop and use throughout their lives are described below along with ideas you can use to help children become "good" learners.

Children use their senses to identify characteristics.

During the awareness and exploration stages of learning (described in the previous learning activity) children use their senses—touching, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting—to learn about concepts and ideas. They learn to give labels to the characteristics they notice—for example, stiff or flexible, magenta or lime, cloudy or clear, and sour or sweet. You can help children become aware of the characteristics of things around them by asking questions such as the following:

> "How would you describe the way these different types of sandpaper feel?"
>
> "What does the smell of the vanilla in this jar remind you of?"
>
> "What makes this screwdriver different from the other one?"

Children use classification skills to make sense of the world.

Children use classification skills to make sense of the world. They sort objects, people, events, and ideas into groups according to traits they have in common. Here are some questions that help children develop their classifying skills:

> "How could you arrange our books so other children can find what they need?"
>
> "How can you group the sports equipment so it's easy to get out and put away?"

> "How will you decide what to put in each discovery box?"
>
> "Your graphs compare how many boys versus girls are in the program. What are some other ways to describe the children in the program?"

School-age children like to compare themselves with their peers. This interest can be used to enhance their classification skills. You can encourage children to conduct surveys and organize the information into graphs—for example, favorite clothes, birthplaces, "pet peeves," or favorite vegetable. This type of activity can help children learn how people are alike and different, an important step in learning to appreciate and value each other.

Sequencing helps children in math and reading.

Sequencing is the ability to put things in a certain order. For example, a time sequence would be first, next, last; a sequence of sizes would be small, medium, and large; sequences in sounds might go from loudest to most quiet; and color shades could go from darkest to lightest. Sequencing is also an important part of the math and reading skills children develop during the school-age years. Here are some questions that help children develop their sequencing skills:

> "What happened first in the story? Then what happened? What happened at the end?"
>
> "You're making an interesting pattern with your beads—two green; two purple; red, yellow, blue; two purple, two green. If you keep using this sequence, how many sets of this pattern will it take to complete your bracelet?"
>
> "How should we arrange these drums so that they go from the lowest sound to the highest?"

Understanding cause and effect leads to predicting outcomes.

School-age children are constantly trying to figure out why something happened or what is going to happen next. For example, if a child notices the leaves are starting to fall, she might announce the weather's going to turn cold soon. This child remembers from past years falling leaves marked the end of warm weather and the beginning of colder days. Another child might notice the plants in the window are drooping. He knows from past experience the plants need water. The last time the plants were this droopy they almost died. As children develop a more refined understanding of cause and effect, their abilities to make accurate predictions also expand. By the school-age years, making predictions is an active part of most children's approach to problem solving. Scientists call this "formulating hypotheses." To help children learn to make predictions, ask questions such as these:

"Where should you put the cheese in the maze to help our pet mouse, Mickey, learn the new route?"

"What do you suppose would happen if we didn't have any rules in our program?"

"Last time you made a lanyard with four colors, it took two yards of each color. How much gimp will you need now, if you're only using three colors?

Ask open-ended questions to encourage children's thinking.

Open-ended questions have many possible answers. They encourage children to think of lots of possible answers and they stimulate further thinking. There are four types of questions you can include in your everyday conversations with children.

Recall questions ask children to describe what they already know: "What do you already know about a swamp?" or "What happened to the black stallion in the book you just finished reading?"

Convergent questions ask about cause and effect or ask a child to make a prediction: "Based on this cover, what type of music do you think will be on this CD?" "How might Roger feel if you used the wood he put aside for his project ?"

Divergent questions require a child to come up with possible ideas and solutions: "What are some ways we can use the *National Geographic* magazines Jose's father gave us?" or "What jobs should we add to the list after we set up the new terrarium?"

Evaluative questions ask a child to make a judgment: "What would you do if you got lost on a field trip?" or "What would you do if you saw some friends smoking?"

Applying Your Knowledge

This learning activity will help you become more aware of how children develop thinking skills. During the next week, keep notes on the times you see children demonstrating thinking skills and what you say to promote thinking and learning. Try to use all four questioning techniques. The sample chart that follows will give you an idea of how to do yours. You can keep a small note pad or index cards handy to jot down your observations as they occur. Review the example; then complete the blank chart with your own observations.

Promoting Children's Thinking

(Example)

Dates: *March 5-9*

Thinking Skill	What the Child Did	What I Said To Promote Thinking
Noticing characteristics of things	*Emilio (7 years) carried a tray of marbles and a magnifying glass to the table. He sat down to examine the marbles.*	*"How are these marbles the same? different?"* *"What can you discover using the magnifying glass?"*
Classifying	*Lisa (11 years) announced she was going to clean up the collage supplies. She took the containers off the shelf and placed them on the table.*	*"What's your plan for organizing the supplies?"* *"Yes, I'd agree it makes sense to separate the different kinds of fabric. How will you decide what goes together?"* *"That's a good idea. Sorting by type of fabric—cotton, wool, felt, corduroy—will make it easier for children to find what they want."*
Sequencing	*Dean and Chaundra (8 years) came in from the playground with a pile of leaves they collected. They spread them out on a table and examined them.*	*"It looks like you have a lot of different leaves. Can you put them in order by size and type?"* *"After you order them by size and type would you like to find out what kind of trees they came from? There are some books about trees in the library area."*
Understanding cause and effect	*Janice (5 years) is working with some older children making paper maché masks. Each child has made a bowl of paste using wheat flour and water. Janice's paste is much thinner than the other children's. It's making the paper soggy. She sees the others aren't having this problem. She asks if she can use someone else's paste.*	*"You could probably use someone else's paste, but let's try to find out how to fix yours."* *"What could you do to make it less runny?"* *"That might make it thicker. You could add more wheat flour and see what happens."*

Promoting Children's Thinking

Dates: ____________________

Thinking Skill	What the Child Did	What I Said To Promote Thinking
Noticing characteristics of things		
Classifying		

Promoting Children's Thinking

(continued)

Thinking Skill	What the Child Did	What I Said To Promote Thinking
Sequencing		
Understanding cause and effect		

Discuss your observations and use of questioning with your trainer.

Learning Activity IV.

Using the Physical Environment to Promote Cognitive Development

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use the environment to help children develop cognitively; and
- provide materials that invite children to explore and question.

A well-planned environment supports cognitive development.

As discussed in Module 3, Program Environment, the environment of your program sets the stage for learning. A well-planned environment is one filled with challenging and interesting materials and equipment, and with a layout and schedule that encourage children to make choices.

The environment can offer many opportunities for children to observe and explore concepts, relationships, and ideas. Therefore, it is important to think carefully about the materials and equipment you select. Materials should reflect the skills and interests of the children in the program. Children grow and change each day, so you and your colleagues will want to review your observation notes to assess the appropriateness of what's on hand and decide when changes are needed. Keep in mind the seven areas of intelligence identified by Howard Gardner: logical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Include equipment and materials that enable you to allow children to build on their strengths.

The environment should respond to children's basic intellectual needs.

Consider these basic intellectual needs of school-age children when equipping your environment:[3]

Children like to focus on reality. Most school-age children like to participate in activities rooted in what they see, hear, and know. Using prop boxes to explore adult roles, painting pictures, participating in group meetings, and writing letters to the newspaper in support of recycling help children represent and share what they have learned.

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[3] Based on Judith Bender, Barbara Elder, and Charles Flatter, *Half a Childhood: Time for School-Age Care* (Nashville, TN: School Age NOTES, 1984), p. 48.

Children like to demonstrate their increasing cognitive abilities. The school-age years are the years of industry. Children like working on projects, and they like demonstrating their newly acquired reading, writing, and math abilities. Long-term projects such as building a paper maché model of Mount Rushmore or creating a display related to a hobby or special skill address this need.

Children's natural curiosity stimulates their learning. They are natural decision makers and problem solvers and rarely tire of opportunities to do either. Involving children in setting program rules and establishing procedures for using new equipment address this need.

Children find humor makes learning fun. Most children have a well-developed sense of humor and irony and most love word play, magic, and just plain silliness. Participating in Joke or Magic Clubs, writing short stories, and making up and performing skits address this need.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on how the materials used by children in different interest areas encourage cognitive growth. The chart that follows lists, for each interest area, examples of materials typically found there, followed by an explanation of how they encourage children's cognitive growth. For each interest area, add three more examples of materials found there and an explanation of how they support and encourage cognitive growth.

Using The Environment to Encourage Cognitive Growth

Quiet Area

Magazines, books, and reference materials (build on curiosity, stimulate reading ability and pleasure, compare what is thought to be real with what is accepted by society)

Computer with age-appropriate software (use thinking skills such as sorting, classifying, patterning, cause and effect, problem solving; enhance creativity)

Writing materials such as pencils, pens, markers, calligraphy pens, ruled and blank papers (express ideas and creativity, develop linguistic skills)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Dramatic Play Area

Prop boxes related to specific cultures or eras in history such as ancient Greece (compare different cultures and times, solve problems unique to the cultures or eras, develop empathy and understanding of others)

Costumes (express creativity and humor, try on new roles)

Theme-related prop boxes such as an inventor box (make predictions, develop thinking skills such as problem solving, express creativity)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Arts and Crafts Area

Drawing and painting materials (express creativity, learn cause and effect, develop planning skills)

Sculpting and constructing materials (develop problem-solving skills, a sense of balance, and aesthetic appreciation)

Weaving and stitchery (develop patterning and sequencing skills, promote special talents)

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

Sand and Water Area

Soap flakes and dyes (observe changes in properties, solve problems, make predictions)

Bubble making prop box (develop creativity, observe changes in volume and physical states, make predictions)

Funnels and containers (observe changes in texture and volume, make comparisons, solve problems, make predictions)

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

Science and Nature Area

Reference books, charts, and posters (generalize and develop personal understanding of conventionally accepted knowledge)

Old clocks, radios, and machines with mallets and tools for taking things apart (investigate how things work, make predictions, test theories, learn cause and effect) Tape measures, rulers, yardsticks, scales, and timers (take measurements before and after experiments, use when making comparisons, examine the properties of objects)

1. ____________________

____

2. ____________________

____

3. ____________________

____

Woodworking Area

Variety of woods, nails and screws, and hammers and screwdrivers (compare properties, make predictions, understand cause and effect)

Books and kits for projects (promote special talents, present standard carpentry techniques, demonstrate basic principles of physics)

Assorted scraps, bottle caps, fish line (use creativity, develop aesthetic sense, solve problems)

1. ____________________

____

2. ____________________

____

3. ____________________

Music Area

CDs, tapes, and players (appreciate differences in pitch, timbre, and mood; appreciate cultural diversity; experience storytelling and oral expression)

Variety of musical instruments (appreciate differences in pitch, timbre, and tempo; appreciate cultural diversity; understand cause and effect, express creativity)

Scarves to use in movement (increase awareness of body movements, express creativity)

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Blocks and Construction Area

Hardwood unit blocks (explore math principles such as proportion and equivalence, understand cause and effect, solve problems)

Large hollow blocks (understand volume, proportion and balance, make and test hypotheses)

People, animal, and transportation props (engage in dramatic play, develop evaluative thinking skills)

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Board and Table Games Area

Books of crossword puzzles, brainteasers, and word games (use and expand vocabularies, develop problem-solving skills)

Materials to make new games (enhance creativity, encourage problem-solving skills, test cause and effect)

Jigsaw puzzles (solve problems, notice characteristics)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Math Area

Geoboards (develop thinking skills such as classifying, patterning, and problem solving; notice characteristics)

Rulers and tapes (measure, generalize and compare what is thought to be real with what is accepted by society, compare, sequence)

Calculators (generalize and compare what is thought to be real with what is accepted by society, develop functional math skills, make and test predictions)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Outdoors

Garden (learn cause and effect, experiment with light, learn about nutrition, classify)

Colored chalk (express creativity, understand spatial relationships, develop aesthetic appreciation)

Equipment for organized sports (understand rules, learn about cause and effect, make predictions)

1. ______________________________
____
2. ______________________________
____
3. ______________________________
____

Discuss your answers with your trainer and your colleagues. Share your suggestions for additional materials and resources for the program with your supervisor.

Learning Activity V.
Helping Children Learn to Solve Problems

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- help children develop problem-solving skills; and
- plan and offer activities that encourage children to think and solve problems.

Problem solving is the process of thinking through a problem, coming up with possible solutions, and trying them out. School-age children typically enjoy experimenting and testing out hypotheses. They make wonderful detectives—they're always on the lookout for clues and solutions. In fact, reading mystery books is a favorite pastime for many school-age children.

Problem solving allows children to be responsible for their own learning.

Children solve problems every day—at school, at home, in the community, in sports activities, in their relationships with other children and adults, and in their activities at the school-age program. The ability to solve problems in everyday situations helps children feel competent and self-assured. By actively seeking answers to questions that interest them, children are learning how to be learners and taking responsibility for their own learning.

If you show children you like to solve problems and learn about the world, they will soon pick up on your enthusiasm. Your positive attitude is very important. It is the first step.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some suggestions for helping children learn to solve problems.

Accept and respect whatever responses children give. Children are more likely to solve problems when they know all their ideas are accepted and valued. Let children know this is a safe place to take risks and make mistakes.

Offer many opportunities to practice problem solving. Provide materials such as puzzles, games, riddles, and rebuses. Encourage children to solve problems related to the program—for example, thinking of a way to serve snack so children can eat when they are hungry rather than at a specific time. Make solving problems fun and rewarding; encourage children to view problems as an opportunity to be creative.

Allow plenty of time for children to talk. Some children have trouble putting their thoughts into words or converting their ideas into a plan of action. It may take some time for them to express their ideas.

Give children a chance to work out their own problems rather than offering suggestions and solutions. If you do step in, offer only enough assistance to get the child back into action. When a solution doesn't work, help the child try other possibilities. Children may need opportunities to try and try again before they are successful. Let them know a solution that doesn't work isn't a failure; it's a step in problem solving.

Respond to children's questions by asking questions that further stimulate their thinking. "Why do you think it didn't work?" or "Who remembers what happened last time?"

Explain the reasons for what you are doing to solve a problem. For example, explain what you are doing to repair a tape player or why you are moving the aquarium away from the window during a winter cold spell. Think out loud as you solve problems so children will see this is a normal part of daily life.

Let children know you are there to support them as they solve problems. Your presence and attention as they work is an important source of support.

Encourage multiple solutions. This allows children to think of many new possibilities and options.

Show children how to use the steps in the scientific method.

In addition to setting a tone that encourages problem solving, many school-age staff find it helpful to actually lay out the steps children can follow to solve a problem. These steps, known as the "scientific method," can be applied whenever there is a problem to solve. For example, Ms. Nunes realizes the children need to use some of their time at the program for homework because they are in scouts and on sports teams. The older children are complaining because it's so noisy they can't get their homework done. She helps the children arrive at a solution by following these steps:

1. **Gather information.**

   When asked to explain the situation, Gillian says, "The Drama Club holds meetings right next to the homework table. We asked them to move but they said they didn't have anywhere to go." Petra, a member of the Drama Club responds, "We don't want to be in their way, but we need a place to hold our club."

2. **State the problem in clear, readily definable terms.**

   Some children need a quiet place where they can do their homework without distractions or interruptions. The Drama Club needs a place to hold their meetings.

3. **Generate ideas to solve the problem.**

   Ms. Nunes invites the children to offer suggestions and asks Gillian to write them on the board:

   a. Schedule one time for homework and another for Drama Club.

   b. Move the club to a new location in the room or in the building.

   c. Move the homework table to a new location in the room or in the building.

4. **Evaluate the answers and select the "best" option.**

   The children discuss the three options and decide to try moving the club to a new location. Ms. Nunes says they might be able to use the gym for Drama Club. Sandy says, "If that doesn't work maybe we can hold our club in the board and table games area. We could move the table and chairs out of the way, then move them back after we are finished." Everyone agrees this is a good second choice if the gym is being used.

5. Test out the selected option.

> Ms. Nunes asks the building manager if the club can use the gym for their meetings twice a week. He agrees. The next day the Drama Club meets in its new location and the older children settle down to do their homework.

Problem solving helps children of all ages with academics and everyday life. Learning to solve problems helps them be better observers, first-rate scientists, and social mediators. Problem solving is a skill children can use throughout their lives.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you help children develop problem-solving skills by focusing on three children—one aged 5 to 7, one 8 to 10, and one 11 or 12. For each child, state the problem, describe what he or she did, what you did, and your plans for the future. Begin by reviewing the examples, then select the three children you will observe.

Using the Scientific Method of Problem Solving

(Example: 5- to 7-year-old)

Child: *Scott* **Age:** *5 1/2 years* **Date:** *October 11*

State the problem:

Scott was getting very frustrated; all his block constructions were falling down. His face was flushed and he kept wiping his hair out of his face. From past experience, I could tell he was on the verge of kicking the blocks, so I quickly joined him. He needed help solving how to keep a tower from falling.

Possible solutions:

I had a quiet talk with Scott about what was going wrong. He was at a loss as to why all of the towers he built kept falling. I watched him build a tower so we could both see what was going wrong. After eight blocks, the tower fell.

I asked Scott to carefully observe with me what was taking place to see if we could figure out the problem. Scott suggested the floor might be crooked, the blocks might be too thin, or he might be hurrying too much to put the blocks on carefully.

Evaluation and testing:

I asked Scott to think of how he could test one of his theories. He decided the biggest problem was the size of the blocks. He gathered a great many blocks of different sizes. This time he started with a large block as the base. Gradually, he narrowed the blocks that were stacked. Using this approach he created an impressive tower of twelve blocks. Scott was mighty pleased with the results and with himself.

Reflections on the process:

I was as pleased as Scott was with the experiment. Another day I'll ask him if he wants to test some of his other theories to see if they, too, will produce positive results.

Using the Scientific Method of Problem Solving

(Example: 8- to 10-year-old)

Children: *Tawan, Sam, Eugene* **Ages:** *9 and 10 years* **Date:** *October 12*

State the problem:

A group of boys have been monopolizing the board and table games area. Even though we have rules about taking turns and rotating activities, they somehow manage to take over the area. The other children—especially the girls—have been complaining.

Possible solutions:

I asked the boys to meet with me to discuss the situation and think of ways to resolve it. I decided to try a conflict resolution technique that would involve them in developing a solution. I asked them to brainstorm some possible solutions, and Sam recorded everything they came up with. Their ideas ranged from banning girls from the area to finding floor space for them to play on.

Evaluation and testing:

After they had exhausted their ideas we went through the list together, eliminating the far-out ideas and expanding on the more reasonable solutions. The boys decided on a solution—they would rearrange the area to create floor space for playing games. This would free up the table for others.

Reflections on the process:

I was pleased the boys came up with their own solution rather than me having to impose rules on them. Working together, they came up with a solution that met the entire group's needs—not just their own. It's been a week now and the solution seems to be working. I now plan to regularly use conflict resolution techniques. Also, I will remind the children they can solve problems on their own without my help, starting by brainstorming solutions.

Using the Scientific Method of Problem Solving

(Example: 11- to 12-year-old)

Child: *Pete* **Age:** *12 years* **Date:** *October 13*

State the problem:

Pete, who is very health conscious, was quite distressed when his dentist told him he was not doing a good job of brushing the insides of his teeth.

Possible solutions:

Pete felt he could either brush his teeth for a longer period of time or get a more effective toothbrush. I encouraged Pete to try his hand at designing a new brush.

Evaluation and testing:

Pete thought brushing longer was a "fall back" option. He wanted to see if he could invent a more effective toothbrush, one that would reach the insides of his teeth. For several hours Pete was consumed with this task. When he showed me his finished design, I was amazed by his creativity: the top of the toothbrush handle forked out into a "y"—on both sides of the "y" there is a brush. The two brushes face each other to brush both sides of the teeth at the same time.

Reflections on the process:

Now Pete wants to develop a model of his invention. He's going to bring in some old toothbrushes from home and use the program's tools and materials. I think his idea is so good, I want to help him find out about getting a patent. I'm also going to urge him to enter competitions like Odyssey of the Mind.

Using the Scientific Method of Problem Solving

(5- to 7-year-old)

Child: ______________ **Age:** ______________ **Date:** ______________

State the problem:

Possible solutions:

Evaluation and testing:

Reflections on the process:

Developing Problem-Solving Skills

(8- to 10-year-old)

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

State the problem:

Possible solutions:

Evaluation and testing:

Reflections on the process:

Developing Problem-Solving Skills
(11- to 12-year-old)

Child: ______________ **Age:** ______________ **Date:** ______________

State the problem:

Possible solutions:

Evaluation and testing:

Reflections on the process:

Discuss your responses with your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for guiding children's cognitive development. Before you go on, take a few minutes to summarize what you've learned.

- Turn back to Learning Activity I, Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Cognitive Development, and add specific examples to the charts of what you have learned about guiding children's cognitive development. Compare your ideas to those in the completed charts at the end of the module.
- Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Guiding Children's Cognitive Development

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Experiment and Make Discoveries

1. **How did Mr. Crain encourage Rita to experiment and make discoveries?**
    a. He gave Rita the address of an organization that pairs American children with children in other countries so they can become pen pals.
    b. He listened to her as she told him what was in her letter.
    c. He let her know he knew of her goal—to become a doctor.
    d. He let her know he appreciated her interest and ability to get things done by teasing her about already having written back.
    e. He told her he would post the address in case her friends want to become pen pals, too.

2. **What did Rita learn from becoming a pen pal?**
    a. She learned about what she had in common with a girl from another country.
    b. She learned what everyday life was like in Russia.
    c. She learned to establish and continue a relationship.

Interacting With Children in Ways That Build on Their Natural Curiosity

1. **Why did Ms. Williams not just give Samantha the correct facts?**
    a. She knew Samantha was not yet ready to understand the abstract principles of physics that explain starlight.
    b. She knew it was more important for Samantha to come up with her own ideas about why the stars shine at night than for her to have the right answer.
    c. She didn't want to stifle Samantha's creativity.

2. **How did Ms. Williams encourage Samantha to think through her theory?**
    a. She took Samantha's ideas seriously and decided to discuss the child's theory with her.
    b. She offered to help Samantha dig holes in the ground and think through her theory.

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Growing Skills

1. **How did Ms. Saavedra provide an opportunity for Brian to use his skills?**
    a. She reinforced Brian's desire to do a professional job.
    b. She let him select the drawing program he liked best.
    c. She introduced him to computer drawing programs.
2. **How did Ms. Saavedra support Brian's mastery of new skills and concepts?**
    a. She was available to work closely with him.
    b. She allowed him to be in charge of his own learning by providing assistance when asked, rather than telling him what to do.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5-7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They are eager to learn the answers to "why" questions.	Respect children's questions. Help them predict answers to their questions and test them out. Offer answers to stretch their thinking.
They like to take on responsibility.	Ask for help doing program chores such as making snack or carrying equipment outdoors. Encourage children to help each other by explaining the rules for a game, demonstrating how to do a craft project, or showing how to feed the snake.
They are developing an understanding of time, but the concepts of past and future are still vague.	Ask recall questions such as "What happened yesterday?" so children can think about the past. Ask questions such as "What will we be doing next week?" to help them focus on the future. Use calendars to show when events took place or will occur. Have children keep a program scrapbook with photos taken throughout the year and labels showing the date, names of people in the pictures, and a brief description *(11-1-93, Sara and Ted, first snow).*
They are curious and want to explore many things.	Regularly put out new and interesting materials to replace ones no longer being used and to respond to changing interests. Be flexible when children use materials in ways other than what you expected.
They express their thoughts and feelings—typically in great and vivid detail.	Encourage children to talk about home and school experiences. Ask lots of open-ended questions to stimulate discussions. Provide opportunities to participate in group meetings; otherwise older children may dominate. (Large programs may hold separate meetings for each age group.)
They read and write simple words, sentences, and texts.	Ask children to help make recipe cards, signs for the block area, or labels for the bulletin board. Provide a wide variety of books and magazines. Read to children (or enlist the aid of an older child)—perhaps a chapter a day from a book that is a little too difficult for them to read to themselves.
They are beginning to understand number concepts and relationships but still need experiences with real objects to fully grasp them.	Provide manipulatives—an abacus, geoboards, parquetry blocks—so children can explore number concepts and relationships. Encourage children to use math skills in program routines and activities—for example, figuring out how many children can be on each side in a ball game.

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8-10-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They like to collect and catalogue "things" such as coins, baseball cards, and rocks.	Provide space and time for children to create displays of their collections. Use nature walks and field trips as opportunities to plan new collections. Share your own collections, for example, owls collected on trips to other countries.
They are intrigued by how things relate to one another.	Provide reference books and science activities related to children's interests. Interested children can make family trees.
They understand explanations and rules and enjoy following rules to the letter.	Provide materials children can use to make up their own games, complete with rules of play. Teach conflict resolution techniques and remind children to use them to solve their problems. To prevent disagreements, review the rules of new games so children will know what is or is not allowed in the game.
They may be critical of their own performance and may need help sorting out realistic goals from unrealistic ones.	Praise children's efforts and help them break down large tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces. Help children develop timelines and put them on a calendar so they can see how and when they will carry out their plans.
They make step-by-step plans and carry them out.	Help children write down the steps needed to carry out their plans (index cards work well)—for example, the steps needed to complete a recipe, do a woodworking project, conduct an experiment, establish a new club, or put on a gymnastics show.
They work on projects over a long period of time.	Allow children space and uninterrupted time for long-term projects such as weaving a wall hanging, making a drum, learning the steps to a complicated folk dance, or writing and illustrating a story.
They vary greatly in academic abilities and interests.	Provide a wide variety of open-ended materials that children can use in different ways, depending on their skills and interests. Allow children to choose what they want to use or do.
They ask many questions and want thoughtful answers in return.	Take the time to listen to children's questions. When you don't know an answer refer children to other resources such as reference books. Ask them to tell you what they find out. Ask children their opinions and share yours if asked to.

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11-12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Guide Cognitive Development
They typically think in abstract terms.	Talk with children about current events and social issues such as recycling. Encourage children to make predictions about the future. If children are interested, help them organize a Futurists Club to learn more about what people think the world will be like when they are grownups.
They are increasingly skilled in reading and writing.	Include a wide range of reading materials at different levels, on different topics, and in different styles. Encourage children to write—newspapers, poems, plays, letters, skits—and share their writing with others. Introduce computer writing programs.
They use a systematic approach to solve problems.	Ask children to explain how they solved a problem so they can see how they used a systematic approach. Allow them to explore a number of alternative solutions to a problem. Help them weigh the pros and cons of each alternative, then select one or more to try.
They add, subtract, multiply, and divide with growing skill.	Encourage children to keep "stats" on professional teams over the season. They can calculate team and individual successes in points, assists, and fouls. Invite a stockbroker or financial advisor to speak about the stock market. If children are interested, help them organize an Investment Club—they can read about stocks, "purchase" some, and then watch them grow or decline in value over time.
They are serious about working and learning.	Show children you respect their work and want to learn from them. Acknowledge that their knowledge and intellectual skills are growing. In particular, let children know when they have more information about a topic than you do.
They show proficiency in particular skills and talents.	Provide a variety of outlets for children to share their skills and to perform. Plan talent shows, clubs, visits from professionals, displays of art and craft projects, and time for children to practice and continue building proficiency.
They can appreciate other points of view.	Encourage children to become pen pals with youngsters living in other countries or states. (See the Orientation for a list of organizations that pair pen pals.) Remind them to use conflict resolution techniques to resolve their own disagreements.

GLOSSARY

Abstract thinking	Thought that is based on ideas.
Cognitive development	Development of the expanding ability to think and reason.
Concept	An idea that combines details or several ideas in an organized way.
Conflict resolution	A systematic approach used to solve problems and disagreements.
Convergent question	A question that asks about the cause and affect of something and the possibility of what can happen.
Divergent question	A question that requires several ideas or solutions.
Evaluative question	A question that asks you to make a judgment.
Hypothesis	A prediction of the answer to a question or problem.
Multiple intelligences	A phrase coined by Howard Gardner to describe the many types of intelligence—logical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.
Open-ended question	A question that can be answered in many ways rather than by "yes" or "no."
Problem solving	Thinking through a problem, coming up with one or several possible solutions, and trying out one or more of these.
Recall question	A question that asks you to describe or retell what you know.
Sequencing	Putting things or events in order.

Module 6:
COMMUNICATION

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OVERVIEW

PROMOTING CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS INVOLVES:

- creating a varied environment that encourages children to develop and use communication skills;
- interacting with children in ways that encourage them to express their ideas and feelings; and
- providing opportunities for children to use their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Communication means expressing and sharing ideas, desires, and feelings with other people. The drive to communicate is strong. Newborns communicate their needs by crying. In a very short time, they can communicate joy by smiling and cooing when they see a familiar face. Older children and adults also convey messages through nonverbal communication. Gestures such as a wave or a shrug are readily understood by everyone. Facial expressions such as a smile or a frown communicate feelings as clearly as a pat on the back. We also communicate through images and pictures, which can represent ideas and feelings.

Communication is the expression of ideas, thoughts, and feelings to others.

Although all forms of communication—gestures, facial expressions, body language, touch, pictures—are important, language is the most critical; it is, therefore, the chief focus of this module. Language can be defined as a system of words and the rules for their use in speaking, reading, and writing. It is through language we communicate our feelings and ideas to others and interpret what others want to tell us.

The use of language is related to cognitive development. (See Module 5, Cognitive to learn about school-age children's cognitive development.) Learning language depends on a child's ever-growing ability to understand words and eventually to read and write them. Language skills, in turn, affect other areas of development. Social development, for example, is dependent on language. Children who have difficulty expressing themselves well are often less able to develop friendships. In addition, language is an important factor in emotional development. Children's self-esteem is enhanced by their growing ability to use words to express how they feel—to communicate their feelings accurately to others.

Language skills affect other areas of development.

Children are born with the natural desire to communicate. In just a few short years, they move from being nonverbal to speaking and understanding thousands of words, their meanings, and the rules for using them. By age 6, children have a working vocabulary of about 2,500 words. By the time they are 11 years old, children typically have a reading vocabulary of 50,000 words. This growth in language skills comes primarily from being around caring adults who talk to children and support their efforts to communicate.

School-age staff can promote communication in several ways. They can provide an environment that encourages children to develop and use communication skills. School-age staff can also interact with children in thoughtful ways that encourage them to express their ideas and feelings. And finally, staff can build into each day's activities opportunities for children to speak, listen, read, and write.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in promoting communication skills

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Develop and Use Communication Skills

Arrange the environment so there are places where children can work, play, and talk in small groups. "Nancy, I think the 'astronauts' in the dramatic play area might need some nourishment on their flight. Could you find out what they'd like for lunch besides Tang?"

Provide materials, time, and space for children to make up their own games and activities. "Today you will have plenty of time to work on the obstacle course you started yesterday."

Provide props and costumes to encourage language development activities such as dramatic play, making up skits, and puppetry. "Dionne, the soap opera you and your friends are writing is hilarious. If you need any props, just let me know."

Stock the quiet area with materials that encourage writing such as pens, pencils, paper, book-binding materials, and a computer, if available. "Marisa, the computer is free now if you want to use it to write your story. If you use the computer, you can go back and make changes to make sure the story is just the way you want it."

Use printing rather than cursive writing on signs, bulletin boards, and other written materials directed at children. "Before posting this week's plan we always make sure all the words are printed and legible so even the youngest children can read some of them."

Include reading and writing materials in all interest areas, for example, pencils and paper in the science and nature area so children can record the results of their experiments. "Veronica, that's an interesting rock you found on our walk. If you want to identify it, there's a handbook on rocks and minerals in the science and nature area."

Provide (or arrange for use of) audio and video tape equipment so children can record their storytelling, plays, skits, and other creations. "Bradley, would you like to tape record the story you just told us about the baseball game. It was so funny, I think we would all enjoy hearing it again."

Designate the quiet area as a place where children can do homework, and respond to children's requests for assistance. "Tiffany, I'd be happy to quiz you on your spelling words. Spend some time going over them yourself, then let me know when you're ready for my help."

Include books, magazines, and reference materials in the quiet area in response to children's interests and expose them to new ideas and topics. Check frequently to see which materials are being used and which should be replaced. "So many of you are into collecting—baseball cards, Barbies, coins, stamps, caps—I thought you'd enjoy looking at some collector's magazines. These will tell you how much items are worth, where you can get things, and how to sell them. They'll be on the bottom shelf in the quiet area."

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage Them to Express Their Ideas and Feelings

Ask open-ended questions to encourage children to think and express their ideas. "Valencia, the polymer clay necklaces you've been making are so festive. What do you do to the clay to make the colors so bright?"

Accept children's use of slang and popular expressions while serving as a model for standard use of language. When Zach tells you, "Like, I can't believe how cool this movie was I saw last week. The special effects were like so awesome," respond by saying, "It sounds like you really enjoyed yourself. Tell me about the special effects."

Support children's bilingualism by learning words in their native language and encouraging them to teach others. "Miguel, perhaps you would like to take the lead in putting out a Spanish edition of our newspaper."

Remind children to review the rules before beginning a game or sport so all players can agree on how to play the game and keep score. "When we play 'wacky softball' everyone on the team has a turn at bat before the inning is over and we run around the bases backwards."

Show respect for children's ideas, even if they don't agree with your own. "Eduardo, I think you're right. Our recycling program probably could be more effective. Would you like to head a committee to look at how we might improve our efforts?"

Observe children's nonverbal cues (for example, body language, dramatic play, drawings, stories) and use the cues to ask questions about their ideas and feelings. "Maurice, your face is all flushed. Are you upset about what Nicky said? Is that what the look on your face means?"

Encourage children to read and write for pleasure, not only because they must complete assigned work. "Martha, this book has ten different short stories about horses. If you don't like the first one, you can try another one."

Help children find words to express their ideas and feelings. "Cara, it sounds like you are trying to help me make sure everyone follows the program's rules. You don't have to tell me when someone disobeys the rules. You can remind the person of the rule, then go back to what you were doing."

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills

Use group meetings as an opportunity for children to share their ideas, raise concerns, and discuss solutions. "Tonya, would you start off today's meeting by telling us about the Energy Conservation Challenge your class is sponsoring?"

Encourage children to share folklore, oral traditions, stories, songs, and books that reflect their family backgrounds. "Franny, could you teach us the Yiddish lullaby about the birds in the sky you were humming the other day?"

Help children plan and implement special interest clubs that use or explore communication skills, for example, publishing a newspaper, planting a garden, discussing favorite books, or learning about television production. "At today's first meeting of the Gardening Club we're going to tour the site, look at books about gardening and seed catalogs, and make a list of the seeds we'd like to purchase."

Offer materials and activities that respond to children's individual and developmental skills and interests. "Some of the third-graders are very excited about learning to write in cursive. Let's put out some lined paper and samples of cursive letters to help them practice."

Keep in touch with the elementary schools attended by children from the school-age program to find out what materials and activities the program could offer to build on or enrich the experiences offered in school. "Most of the children are in schools that use a writer's workshop model. Let's make sure we don't go around correcting everything they write since they're being encouraged to use invented spelling in the early grades."

Plan trips and special activities to expand children's language skills and interests. "You've been doing such a great job getting out our weekly newsletter, I thought you might enjoy taking a field trip to see how the city paper is written and delivered every day."

Build opportunities for children to develop and use communication skills into all program activities, not just those specifically related to reading, writing, listening, and speaking. "In yesterday's emergency drill some of you forgot our procedures. Jenny and Linda have made a chart to show everyone what to do and where to go in an emergency. They'll review the chart with you, then we'll post it next to the cubbies."

Promoting Children's Communication Skills

In the following situations, school-age staff are helping children develop communication skills. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Develop and Use Communication Skills

As Ms. Alessi accompanies a group of children outdoors, she listens as eleven-year-old Jonathan enthusiastically reports on the trip his class made to the Museum of Natural History. Later that day, while Jonathan is working on a puzzle, she asks him about the field trip. "It sounds like you had a great class trip to the museum. Tell me more about what you saw." "You wouldn't believe all the dinosaur bones they had," Jonathan begins excitedly. "And whole skeletons. And wax models. There was an entire room with Tyrannosaurus and Brontosaurus and Diplodocus and Ornithopoda and Stegosaurus and Meglasaurus and Maurosaurus models walking around like they were still alive. It was awesome." "It sounds like the museum really made the dinosaur age come alive," says Ms. Alessi, matching Jonathan's enthusiasm. "You know," adds Jonathan, "sometimes I wish I lived back then so I would really know what it's like to have seen a dinosaur in the back yard." Ms. Alessi laughs at Jonathan's comment and then adds, "Actually, Jonathan, that's not a bad idea. You could write a story about what it would be like to be a boy living in the Dinosaur Age. I'm sure the children here and in your class at school would enjoy reading it. You can use the computer to make it look like a professional manuscript. We have several publishing software programs you can choose from. There are drawing materials and bookbinding supplies in the quiet area in case you decide to illustrate and bind your story into a book. And who knows—it might just become our next best seller!"

1. How did Ms. Alessi build on Jonathan's interests to promote communication skills?

2. In what ways did Ms. Alessi provide an environment that encouraged communication skills?

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage Them to Express Their Ideas and Feelings

Seven-year-old Stuart loves to build with blocks—tall, elaborate constructions are his specialty. The last few days, Ms. Kearney has noticed Stuart has just been piling blocks atop each other without any clear design plan. She knows from talking with Stuart's mother that his father is away for a month on business. She thinks there might be some connection. Ms. Kearney goes over to the block area and kneels down beside Stuart. In a quiet voice she says, "Your block-building these past few days looks quite a bit different from the rocket launching pads and airports you usually build. These don't seem to have as much energy or excitement. Is that the way you're feeling?"

"I'm not feeling anything," Stuart replies. "Sometimes when we're sad it makes us feel kind of empty. Could that be what's going on? Is something making you sad?" asks Ms. Kearney. "Yeah," says Stuart. "My dad's gone and I miss him a lot." "I bet your dad misses you, too," says Ms. Kearney. "I have an idea. Would you like to write him a letter? I'm sure it would brighten his day to hear from you." Stuart nods. She walks Stuart over to the quiet area where there are lots of papers, pens, markers, and a computer. She asks Stuart what he'd like to use to write his letter and accompanies him as he chooses a pen and stationery. She asks, "Would you like to write your letter alone or shall I sit with you?" At his request, Ms. Kearney keeps him company while he writes the letter to his dad.

1. How did Ms. Kearney know something was bothering Stuart?

2. How did Ms. Kearney help Stuart express his feelings and thoughts?

3. What other questions might Ms. Kearney have asked to draw out Stuart?

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills

When Mr. Williams reviews the program's suggestion box he finds many ideas for activities. Several children want to write and share their stories, so he plans a Writer's Workshop. Members will learn about writing, then write and publish their stories in a journal. He asks, "What makes a good story?" "Something exciting happens," offers Derrick. "It makes you laugh," says Shantay. "It's unpredictable and it's fun," says Bob. "Okay," he says, "let's start with Bob's idea." He tells the children a story about his trip to Italy. "I was eager to try out my Italian skills, but I couldn't read the menu at the restaurant. When the waiter came, I tried making animal sounds to order pork chops. After eloquently going 'oink, oink' to the waiter, I felt sure savory pork chops would soon be mine. Unfortunately, the waiter thought 'oink' meant fried calves' brains. When my dinner came, I pretended it was just what I wanted."

Mr. Williams asks if anyone has a story in which something unpredictable happened to them, causing a funny turn of events. Bob and Morgan both share anecdotes. Then he asks, "Who remembers something scary that happened to them?" Ayeisha relates in great detail how she was awakened from sleep by an earthquake while visiting her dad in California.

Having set the stage, Mr. Williams says. "You all have stories to tell. Some are funny, some exciting, some scary. Some may be sad. What's important is they are your stories and will be interesting to read. I think we're ready to get started on our first issue. Let's include any story you think other children would like to read. We'll begin by discussing your ideas."

1. **What did Mr. Williams do to interest the children in writing stories?**

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2. **How did the Writer's Workshop promote the children's language and literacy skills?**

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Experiences with Communication

Communication skills are central to our ability to relate to others. Our relationships with colleagues, friends, and family members depend in large part on how well we understand and respond to what they have to say and how well they understand us.

To understand what others have to say, we need to do three things:

- receive the message;
- interpret the message; and
- send back an appropriate response.

Communication skills involve receiving and interpreting information.

Many factors influence how well we understand the communications we receive from others. These include how we are feeling at that moment, how well we know the persons communicating with us, and how carefully we listen. For example, suppose you've had a bad morning before coming to work. You are feeling overwhelmed. Your colleague greets you with the following statement:

"This storeroom is a mess! I can't find anything in it!"

You may interpret this message as a criticism and respond defensively: "When am I supposed to find the time to deal with the storeroom? I can hardly keep up with everything else I have to do!" Your colleague may be surprised by your response. She might herself react defensively: "Don't you think I'm just as busy as you are?" Neither of you meant to hurt the other's feelings, but that's exactly what happened.

On another day, when you are feeling more on top of things, you might interpret the message very differently. Your response might be something like this: "You're absolutely right. We've been so busy with other things, we never seem to get to the storeroom. Maybe we can ask some of the children to help us out." This time, the message was positively interpreted with respect for both parties.

Communication is both verbal and nonverbal.

In conveying our thoughts and feelings to others, we rely on our communication skills to get our messages across accurately. We send messages verbally (using words) and nonverbally (using gestures and body language). Verbal messages can be the clearest kind of message if we say what we mean.

"I'd like to do something about the storeroom. I can never find what I need. What do you think about asking some of the older children to help us out?"

"I'd love to go to a movie tonight. What time is best for you?"

Clarity is vital to communication.

But even verbal messages can be unclear if we fail to say what we really think and want. Using the same examples, we could say:

"What are we going to do about the storeroom?" (when we know very well what we think needs to be done).

"What do you feel like doing tonight?" (hoping the other person will want to go to a movie but remaining unclear about our own wishes).

Questions can clarify the sender's intent.

In addition to clearly sending messages, we need to receive them as they were intended. We can do this by probing the sender. Questions and statements that help to clarify the message include the following:

- Are you saying that . . .?
- Do you mean . . .?
- Do I understand correctly that . . .?
- It sounds like you want . . .

How do you rate your ability to communicate effectively?

	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
I am able to state my ideas clearly	☐	☐	☐
I am able to express my feelings in words	☐	☐	☐
I say what I think	☐	☐	☐
If I'm not sure what someone means, I check out what I think was said	☐	☐	☐
I try to interpret nonverbal communication to help me better understand what someone is feeling	☐	☐	☐

Review your answers to this brief checklist. Are there any areas you would like to improve? As you go through this module, you may discover some strategies for improving your own communication skills.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of the module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to promote children's communication skills. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Develop and Use Communication Skills	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Arranging the environment so there are places where children can work and play together in small groups.	☐	☐	☐
2. Providing materials, time, and space for children to make up their own games and activities.	☐	☐	☐
3. Providing props, costumes, and other materials that encourage language development activities such as, dramatic play, making up skits, and puppetry.	☐	☐	☐
4. Stocking the quiet area with materials that encourage writing such as pens, pencils, paper, book-binding materials, and a computer, if available.	☐	☐	☐
5. Using printing rather than cursive writing on signs, bulletin boards, and other written materials directed at children.	☐	☐	☐
6. Including reading and writing materials in all interest areas.	☐	☐	☐
7. Providing (or arranging for use of) audio and video tape equipment so children can record their plays, skits, storytelling, and other creations.	☐	☐	☐
8. Designating a quiet area as a place where children can do homework, and responding to children's requests for assistance.	☐	☐	☐
9. Including books, magazines, and reference materials in the quiet area in response to children's interests and expose them to new ideas and topics.	☐	☐	☐

	I Do This		
Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage Them to Express Their Ideas and Feelings	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Asking open-ended questions to encourage children to think and express their ideas.	☐	☐	☐
11. Accepting children's use of slang and popular expressions while serving as a model for standard use of language.	☐	☐	☐
12. Supporting children's bilingualism through activities and interactions in the program.	☐	☐	☐
13. Reminding children to review the rules before beginning a game or sport so all players can agree on how to play the game and keep score.	☐	☐	☐
14. Showing respect for what children have to say.	☐	☐	☐
15. Observing children's nonverbal cues and using the cues to ask questions about their ideas and feelings.	☐	☐	☐
16. Encouraging children to read and write for pleasure, not only because they must complete assigned work.	☐	☐	☐
17. Helping children find words to express their ideas and feelings.	☐	☐	☐
Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills			
18. Using group meetings as opportunities for children to share their ideas, raise concerns, and discuss solutions.	☐	☐	☐
19. Encouraging children to share folklore, oral traditions, stories, songs, and books that reflect their family backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills (continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
20. Helping children plan and implement special interest clubs that use or explore communication skills.	☐	☐	☐
21. Offering materials and activities that respond to children's individual and developmental skills and interests.	☐	☐	☐
22. Keeping in touch with the elementary schools attended by children from the school-age program to find out what materials and activities the program could offer to build on or enrich the experiences offered in school.	☐	☐	☐
23. Planning trips and special activities to expand children's language skills and interests.	☐	☐	☐
24. Building opportunities for children to develop and use communication skills into all program activities, not just those specifically related to reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

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Begin the learning activities for Module 6, Communication.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Promote Communication Skills

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize typical behaviors of school-age children that are related to language development; and
- use what you know about school-age children to promote their communication.

Communication begins when infants learn to give and receive messages.

The foundation for a child's ability to communicate is built early in life. Infants use different cries to communicate hunger, fatigue, or discomfort. In a remarkably short time, they recognize familiar voices, turning their heads and smiling in response. They understand words have meanings; they can point to their nose when an adult says, "Where's your nose?" They love to hear adults talk and sing to them and to hear the sounds they make repeated back to them.

Children rapidly increase their vocabularies.

As in all areas of growth, children develop language at their own pace. Some say their first words before age one. Some hardly speak at all before age two. The average 18-month-old has a speaking vocabulary of at least 25 words; however, most toddlers understand far more spoken words than they can speak.

By the time they become preschoolers, most children have developed a wide range of skills in nonverbal and verbal language. They seem to learn new words every day. It is estimated preschoolers add 600 words to their speaking vocabulary every year from ages three through five.

Younger school-age children are learning to use language to express their ideas.

During the school-age years, children learn to use language as a true tool of communication. While the rate of learning new words begins to taper off after the frantic rate of growth of the preschool years, children refine their skills rapidly. From ages 5 to 7, they increasingly use language to express themselves. This involves complex cognitive skills such as speaking to and with others about what they observe, struggling to find the appropriate words to describe their ideas, presenting evidence to support generalizations, and asking questions to learn more.

Young school-age children are often nonstop talkers, engaging anyone who will listen in conversation. They may begin to use language aggressively—slang, mild profanity, and clichés tend to characterize their speech. Children this age may also show intolerance for those who speak with accents or speak a language different than theirs. On the positive side, they are beginning to use their language skills to cultivate friends, to socialize, and to critique their own behavior.

Young children are also interested in the meaning of language. The world of reading opens up great possibilities. They enjoy using their skills to read books, signs, instructions on the computer, and directions from a board game.

Language is used as a tool by 8- to 10-year-olds.

From ages 8 to 10, children become increasingly adept in their use of language. Children can express subtle emotions and think critically. There is a wide range of language skills in this age group. Some children are very fluent; others are developing language skills at a slower pace.

During these years, many children enjoy doing a great deal of socializing. A byproduct of these prolonged conversations may be the increased use of slang and profanity. Coded languages such as Pig Latin and secret passwords are also common.

Reading and writing are leisure activities.

Eight- to ten-year-olds are increasingly skilled in reading and writing, as well as oral language. For this age group, reading and writing become activities of choice, not just school work. Children seek out books and writing activities for pleasure.

From ages 11 to 12, children are able to use sophisticated grammar. Their use of compound and complex sentences, proper nouns, pronouns, and prepositions approaches that of adults. It is estimated their reading vocabulary stretches beyond 50,000 words—a far cry from the 25 spoken words a toddler knows.

Older school-age children use language to define their identity.

With this facility in language, older school-age children can use their language skills to achieve self-understanding. They continue spending a great deal of time talking to peers—at school, at the program, and over the phone. They never seem to run out of things to talk about. They use language to define themselves, their values, and the goals they want to pursue. In addition, slang and "fad" words may pepper their conversations. Some children use profanity, usually because they think it identifies them as a member of a particular peer group. The social connection they have with their peers looms all important in their lives.

Work with parents to assist children with speech and language problems.

Most children do not acquire all the sounds in the English language until age eight, and some speech errors could be caused by missing teeth or dental abnormalities. However, there may be children in your program with speech and language problems. Children who frequently mispronounce certain sounds or have difficulty understanding what is said to them, following directions, or expressing themselves, may have language delays. You can respond by giving them simple, one-step directions, and repeating them as necessary, modeling correct pronunciation of words, and introducing new vocabulary and a variety of language forms: stories, poetry, plays, songs. Discuss your observations with the child's parents. If they are already aware of the problem and working with the child's teacher and other professionals, you can coordinate your approach with that used at home and school. If they are not aware of the problem, encourage them to discuss your observations with the teacher and seek professional screening and assessment, if needed.

Stuttering is a common speech disorder, seen more frequently in boys than girls. If a child struggles to produce words, hesitates or repeats words or parts of words, observe the child more closely. Some repetition and hesitation is normal. However, if a child consistently and frequently seems to struggle with speaking, then the child may have a stuttering disorder. It is important not to add to any discomfort the child may already have about his stuttering. Don't interrupt or finish the child's sentences. Be patient and give the child as much time as needed to express himself. And, again, discuss your observations with the child's parents and coordinate the approaches you use to assist the child.

Applying Your Knowledge

The charts that follow list some typical behaviors of children at ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12. Included are behaviors relevant to communication skills. The right column asks you to identify ways staff can use this information to promote communication skills. Try to think of as many examples as you can. As you work through the module and learn new strategies, you can add them to the charts. You are not expected to think of all the examples at one time. If you need help getting started, turn to the completed charts at the end of the module. By the time you complete this module, you will find you have learned many ways to promote children's communication skills.

As you complete the charts that follow, keep in mind that many of the examples of children's behavior and staff responses apply to more than one age group. Developmentally appropriate programs are based on a knowledge of child development and are responsive to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Therefore, it is important to observe children regularly and to use what you learn to individualize the program.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills
They are interested in the meaning of words.	*Provide junior editions of dictionaries and encourage children to use them. Maintain a mystery word box to record and respond to children's questions.*
They ask seemingly endless questions.	
They enjoy engaging others in conversations.	
They like to provide rich details when describing things or events.	
They can be intolerant of people who speak with different accents or languages.	
They recognize grammatical mistakes.	

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children are Like	**How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills**
They often exaggerate, boast, and tell tall tales.	*Channel children's urges into storytelling activities. Share with them literature of this genre. Have an indoor or outdoor picnic at which children tell tall tales and ghost stories.*
Their language skills may vary greatly from those of their peers.	
They like to socialize with friends.	
They like coded languages and passwords.	
They can think critically.	
They can verbalize their ideas and feelings.	
They may begin to use slang and profanity.	

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills
They often can speak with the fluency of adults.	*Provide lots of opportunities for children to develop and refine their speaking skills—for example, leading group meetings, putting on plays, expressing their ideas to others, describing an experiment, reciting poetry, and recording stories or poems on tape.*
They may question rules and beliefs they previously accepted.	
They may be self-centered and self-critical.	
They like to speak in complex sentences.	
They like thinking about abstract concepts.	
They use a lot of slang and "fad" words and sometimes use profanity as a way to identify with their peers.	

When you have completed as much as you can do of the charts, discuss your answers with your trainer. As you do the rest of the learning activities, you can refer back to the charts and add more examples of how school-age staff promote children's communication skills.

Learning Activity II.

Helping Children Develop Communication Skills[1]

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the importance of all components of communication; and
- help children develop communication skills in each component area.

Children develop communication skills in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each area is vitally important. Children use these skills in their home life (taking a phone message for a parent), at school (to learn and complete assignments in almost every subject), at the program (to develop friendships), and in community activities (to learn and follow the rules of a sport or to work on scout badges). Mastering these skills allows children to be successful today and in their adult lives. You can encourage children to develop and use communication skills in every interest area and in every activity.

Listening

Listening involves hearing what is said and relating what is heard to personal knowledge. It can involve following directions, reflecting on what is heard, and paying attention. While children naturally develop listening skills throughout their lives, you can help children improve their listening competence.

One way you can help children improve their listening skills is to model them in your own conversations. For example, look directly at someone who is talking, give your undivided attention, comment on what was said, ask questions, facilitate discussions, and make sure each person who wishes to has an opportunity to speak. "I think I understand what you are telling me, Carolyn. The other children playing badminton want to keep score and you don't. Tell me some more about why you don't want to keep score. Then I can listen to the other children's point of view and try to help you and your friends solve the problem."

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[1] Based on Diane Trister Dodge, Judy R. Jablon, and Toni S. Bickart, *Constructing Curriculum for the Primary Grades* (Washington, D.C.: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1994), pp. 252-263.

Try these suggestions.

There are a number of strategies you can use to help children become better listeners. Here are some examples:

- Encourage children to participate in group discussions in which children speak one at a time. "I can see everyone has an idea for our Science Club fair. Ed, you can write them down as everyone take turns talking."
- Give oral directions that necessitate listening. Begin with one or two steps, then add more. "Marnie, when your group has finished making posters, please wipe off the tables and throw the trash in the outside bin."
- Have children face the person they are talking to and give their undivided attention to the conversation. "Mark, I'd really like to hear about your painting, but it's hard for me to hear because you keep turning around to look at the block builders. Try looking at me while you talk."
- Point out the differences in tone in spoken conversations. "Louise, I can tell you're excited about visiting your Grandma next week. You sound almost breathless. I really enjoyed hearing about the surprise photo album you made for her. Be sure to tell me exactly what she says and does when she opens the package."
- Play games such as "telephone" and teach children songs with choruses and different verses. "When we first learned to sing 'Stewball' everyone knew the chorus, but only a few of us could remember the words to all the verses. Now we sing out loud and clear for the chorus and the verses."

Speaking

Speaking skills develop hand in hand with listening skills. As children become better listeners, they develop more sophisticated speaking skills. They learn to convey ideas and questions in conversations, discussions, and presentations. Children may need your help to express their thoughts, organize their ideas, and learn more precise vocabulary words. Children who are encouraged to talk about their experiences and try out new words, find their enriched vocabulary can be empowering. For example:

> Several children are discussing their field trip to a vegetable packing plant. Bernardo describes how the people worked together to pack the tomatoes. "You remember, they were all in a row and each person had a job to do and they did the job over and over again." "That's a perfect description," says Ms. Musen. "When people work like that they are working on an assembly line." Later that afternoon Bernardo is busily occupied in the block area constructing what looks like a factory.

> When Ms. Musen walks by she hears him tell another child, "Put these people in a row along that big block. They are going to work on an assembly line to get the peas and carrots to the city."

In addition, speaking also involves tone of voice. Think about how a simple word like "sure" can convey an entirely different meaning if it is said sarcastically rather than enthusiastically. You can encourage children to observe language and to reflect on the way words make them feel. Explain it's not just the words they choose, but how they say them that must be considered. Tone of voice and body language are important parts of communication.

You have many opportunities to promote children's speaking skills through nearly everything that happens in the program. In most cases, this happens indirectly, as children use interest areas, engage in activities, and make and carry out their plans.

Try these suggestions.

As you interact with children, you might:

- Encourage Jason and Theresa to state the rules for Chinese Checkers before beginning play;
- Ask Shantih to read aloud the minutes from the last meeting of the Magic Club;
- Adapt the group meeting agenda so Reynaldo can lead a discussion on the pros and cons of retiring some interest areas and offering new ones; and
- Spend one-on-one time with Brett so he can share his feelings about his mother's frequent hospital stays.

You can promote speaking skills by encouraging children to:

- Describe what they are thinking or feeling;
- Make up word games, riddles, and imaginary language;
- Share something they have written or an excerpt from a favorite author:
- Put on plays and skits;
- Participate in oratory contests and debates; and
- Talk to each other and to staff—in informal conversations and during club and group meetings, indoors and outdoors, on field trips and while at the program.

Reading

Reading is a complex process involving both the recognition and sound of letters and words and what they mean. Typically schools teach children to read using one of two approaches. The skills approach teaches children word attack skills, such as sounding out words by syllables. The whole language approach emphasizes learning to read and write throughout the curriculum. Instead of focusing just on the parts of language such as letter sounds or word recognition, children are encouraged to read and write as much as possible using the skills they have. In the process of reading and writing, children learn new skills and refine the ones they have. While the actual teaching of reading is the domain of the school, staff in school-age programs can support the process and help children become more confident readers.

It's important to understand what approach to reading the local school uses so that the program's activities support children appropriately. By treating reading as a natural and integral part of your program, you help children make reading a natural, integral part of their own lives.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some things you might do to encourage children's enjoyment of reading.

- Make print a natural part of the environment. When print is integrated into the program environment, children regard reading as a natural part of life. For example, label the activity areas, post weekly schedules, put up job charts that track children's responsibilities, provide message boards, showcase children's written work, and display children's signed art and architecture projects—including descriptions of the work in the "artist's" own words.
- Read aloud to children, either individually, in small groups, or to the full group. This is especially important for beginning readers, but older children may enjoy this activity as well. Older children may enjoy reading to younger ones.

  By hearing good books, children learn reading is both worthwhile and pleasurable. Reading aloud introduces children to different types of literature, expands their vocabularies, and lengthens their attention spans. It also provides children with models of different writing styles and familiarizes them with story structure. But most importantly, it creates an aura of comfort around language and reading.
- Choral readings are a wonderful way of making reading fun and giving children confidence. Favorite books—either in the form of "Big Books" or large print versions printed on flip chart paper are centrally displayed so all participants can see the print (and illustrations). Everyone reads together,

allowing shy readers to be bolstered by the collective voice of the group. Particularly enjoyable are books with repetitive passages or "funny-sounding" names (such as Ricki-Tikki-Tavi in *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling), cumulative plots which build to a climax (such as "this is the cat that killed the rat that ate that malt that lay in the house that Jack built"), and rhymes (such as *Custard and Company* by Ogden Nash).

In addition to being fun and building confidence, shared reading experiences strengthen children's abilities to follow the printed word and increase the number of words they can recognize immediately by sight.

- Encourage children to read independently. As with most skills, practice with reading leads to proficiency. Provide a variety of reading materials that match children's skills and interests. Stock the quiet area with magazines, joke books, biographies, children's classics, sports books, how-to manuals, and books of lists and statistics. Children might make up an acronym to use as a sign for the area, for example DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) or SQUIRT (Special Quiet Uninterrupted Individual Reading Turf). Check this area regularly to make sure it is both appealing to children and stocked with books and magazines that reflect their current interests.

Writing

Like reading, writing is a skill that offers children many rewards. Most children have a natural desire to write. Even before they can read, young children make scribbled attempts at writing. As they become familiar with the alphabet, they start making recognizable letters. By the early school-age years, children begin to understand writing has to be organized on a page. They learn letters are not just randomly placed, but are grouped together to form words. As they grasp the connection between speech and writing children start to understand each letter represents a sound. At this stage they begin writing words, often "inventing" spelling according to the way a word sounds. With further exposure to reading and writing, children learn to use conventional spelling for their words.

It is likely that each child in the program has some level of writing ability. Most children below the ages of 8 or 9 years, use printing rather than cursive writing. Older school-age children (the exact age depends on when cursive writing is introduced in the elementary school curriculum) learn to use cursive writing. Some children are eager to practice and use "handwriting." Others, with less developed fine motor skills, may find it difficult to master this new form of writing. To promote children's printing or cursive writing skills it is important to know, first of all, what approach the local school is using in teaching writing and then, where each child is developmentally. For the younger children, model printed writing by forming letters according to accepted standards. For example, when making signs and labels, use capital and lower case letters rather than all capital letters. Use cursive writing with older children only. To find out the grade, style, and time of year at which cursive writing is introduced in your community, ask the principals at the schools attended by the children.

As with other forms of communication, an important way to support children's efforts to write is to serve as a role model. When children see you checking attendance, filling out forms, and posting notes on the message board, they observe writing serves a purpose. This, in turn motivates children to communicate in writing.

Try these suggestions.

You can help children develop and refine their writing skills by offering meaningful writing opportunities. Here are some examples:

- Encourage children to form a club to publish a newspaper or literary magazine.
- Sponsor a Writer's Workshop, as described earlier in this module.
- Encourage children to write short stories, poetry, plays, skits, and musicals they can perform for the group.
- Suggest children keep journals—to share or keep entirely private.
- Provide opportunities to research and write about topics of interest to them, featured in current events, or related to their school projects.
- Establish message boards children can use to write to each other.
- Provide information on organizations that match children with penpals from other countries or parts of the United States (see the list in the Orientation).
- Set up a graffiti board children can have fun with (remember to have the children establish rules for appropriate use of the board!).
- Make sure the quiet area has lots of papers, a variety of pens (including those used for calligraphy), and markers children can use for independent writing. There should be ample table space and comfortable, straight-back chairs to facilitate writing—although some children like to write on the floor using clipboards or another hard surface.

- Have children develop recipe cards for cooking and art materials (such as clay, paint, and wheat paste). Children can draw pictures, use photographs, or clip art to illustrate the text.
- Encourage children to develop and write up rules for games and sports activities that they then present to the group.
- Make it a practice to have children sign their art work. Have them provide titles and a narrative description similar to the way museums display this information.
- Establish an area where children can post their stories and poems for all to read and admire.
- Ask for "volunteers" to assist staff in writing-related tasks, such as taking phone messages.
- Stock the computer with creative writing programs of various difficulty levels.
- Provide tables in a quiet area where children can work on written homework assignments by themselves or with adult assistance.
- Put up a suggestion box so children can communicate their ideas to staff.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you complete four observations, one for each area of communication—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Observe one child age 5 to 7, one 8 to 10, and one 11 to 12. The fourth child may be any age. If you work with only one age group or do not have a full span of ages enrolled, conduct four representative observations. Then, review your observation notes and complete the observation summary forms. It may take a week or longer to finish your observations. Begin by reading the example that follows.

Supporting Children's Communication Skills: *Writing*

(Example)

Child: *Bethany* **Age:** *5 1/2 years* **Date:** *November 2*

Describe this child's writing skills:

Bethany can write her name and those of her family, including her dog Ben and her fish George and Babs. She signs her name to her artwork, but asks me to print descriptions of what she has made on the bottom of her drawings and paintings. She likes me to read them back to her at least three or four times.

What I did to support this child's development:

Bethany seems excited about her emerging writing skills. I think the best thing I can do to support her development is to provide her with new opportunities to try printing. I'm also going to involve her in writing the descriptions of her artwork, instead of doing it all myself. When she does write words, even if they are not spelled correctly, I will praise her and won't make any corrections because I don't want to discourage her enthusiasm.

What were the results?

I'm very pleased with Bethany's development. It's a pleasure to see how much satisfaction she takes in writing. Most of the time she writes the descriptions of her artwork herself rather than asking me to do it. She enjoys making letters (and many squiggles). She's very proud of what she does and points out each recognizable letter.

Since Bethany likes to cook, I thought it would be helpful to ask some of the older children to print words on the picture recipe cards. This has worked out great. Several times I found her copying the words on the cards. I also discovered these cards are teaching her to read. She can sight read many of the written words and match them to the pictures.

Supporting Children's Communication Skills: *Listening*

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

Describe this child's listening skills:

____

____

____

What I did to support this child's development:

____

____

____

What were the results?

____

____

____

Supporting Children's Communication Skills: *Speaking*

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

Describe this child's speaking skills:

____

____

____

What I did to support this child's development:

____

____

____

What were the results?

____

____

____

Supporting Children's Communication Skills: *Reading*

Child: __________ **Age:** __________ **Date:** __________

Describe this child's reading skills:

What I did to support this child's development:

What were the results?

Supporting Children's Communication Skills: *Writing*

Child: __________ **Age:** __________ **Date:** __________

Describe this child's writing skills:

What I did to support this child's development:

What were the results?

Discuss this activity with your trainer and your colleagues.

Learning Activity III.

Using the Physical Environment to Promote Communication Skills

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use the environment to help children develop communication skills; and
- provide materials that encourage children to use communication skills.

The environment lets children know that communication is valued.

The physical environment of a school-age program (see Module 3, Program Environment) lets children know that communication is valued. If there are few books and magazines or if there is no quiet place to do homework, children get the message this is not a place to be reading or writing. On the other hand, if there are tables for writing, a computer with interesting reading and writing software that can be individualized for differing skill levels, and a rich variety of books, magazines, and reference materials, children are encouraged to develop their reading and writing skills.

Children communicate freely in a supportive environment.

Setting up the environment to promote literacy is, indeed, one of the best strategies school-age staff can use to help children develop communication skills. First, you can create an environment that, by its design, lets children know they are free to communicate with one another. When children feel comfortable and relaxed, they are more willing to communicate their ideas and feelings. How you relate to each child—how easily each one learns you can be trusted—will influence their openness to listen and talk. When children learn you will accept them as they are, they are more likely to respond to your questions and to share their thoughts with you. Similarly, it's important to help children feel at ease with other children in the group. You've probably noticed the most verbal children are the ones who make friends easily. It's especially important to be aware of the shy children in the group. They may need your help to feel accepted by their peers and to learn how to communicate their ideas and feelings.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some specific ways to create an environment that encourages children to communicate.

Arrange the space so children can spend time in small groups. Conversations are more likely to occur when just a few children are present. Small tables where two to four children can play board games or put a model together serve this purpose well.

Create interesting prop boxes to enhance dramatic play. When children are fully involved in dramatic play, high levels of social interaction naturally take place. Props related to exploring space, running an animal hospital, or operating a park ranger station readily spur children to communicate with one another. (See Learning Activity II in Module 9: Social, for more information on prop boxes.)

Keep interesting things in the environment. Items such as mystery objects from nature, photographs depicting life in other countries, prints of famous paintings, and "beautiful junk" encourage children to explore, ask questions, talk about their ideas, and play with each other.

Plan group projects. These activities require children to plan and work together. Cooking activities or growing crystals, for example, foster verbal interaction.

Take trips and neighborhood walks. School-age children are ready to learn about the community beyond home, school, and the school-age program. Impromptu walks and planned field trips can expand children's experiences and give them new things to talk or write about.

Children need quiet spaces for reading, writing, and listening.

Comfortable, quiet spaces invite children to read and write on their own. As important as it is to support group communication, it's also vital that children feel they have permission to be on their own. An inviting quiet area allows children to cozy up in an overstuffed pillow and read a novel or a joke book, sit at a computer and work through a creative story writing program, listen to a book on tape, do their assigned reading for school, write in a journal, or correspond with a pen pal.

Independent language and literacy experiences can also be encouraged throughout the room by the materials you provide. For example, you can include materials for making signs in the blocks and construction area. Index cards with directions for conducting simple experiments posted in the science area promote independent reading. Crossword puzzles and acrostics in the board and table games area also support independent activities.

School-age staff can expose children to print in many aspects of the program.

Using print in meaningful ways throughout the environment can also contribute to a supportive environment. As noted in Learning Activity II, when children are exposed to print, they gain an appreciation for the usefulness of reading and writing in their daily lives. One of the most useful and natural ways to use print is as a management tool—attendance charts, job charts, schedules, program rules, and message boards, for example. You can also use print within each of the interest areas—as storage labels, as directions for using certain equipment, to enhance dramatic play environments, and to personalize work areas.

By using these techniques, you can make communication a natural part of children's activities. In an environment that facilitates literacy, children develop communication skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on promoting children's communication skills in each interest area and outdoors. The chart that follows lists typical interest areas in school-age programs. For each one, list at least three suggested materials or design considerations to promote children's communication skills. Two examples are provided for each area.

Using The Environment To Promote Communication Skills

Quiet Area

Tables and comfortable chairs and floor space where children can read and write.

A computer with reading and writing software and documentation manuals. Software has varying difficulty levels so that gifted writers as well as children with language delays can work at their own pace: e.g., *Reader Rabbit* (The Learning Company), *Milliken Storyteller* (Milliken) and *Children's Writing and Publishing Center* (The Learning Company).

Dramatic Play Area

Books, magazines and newspapers.

Markers and writing materials for enhancing play themes: e.g., a medical office theme might include a receptionist's nameplate, message pads, a patient sign-in sheet, a monogrammed lab coat, forms, an appointment book, magazines, health care pamphlets, and phone books.

Art and Crafts Area

Two-sided easels to encourage communication.

Recipes for making playdough, molding clay, goop (cornstarch and water), tempera, paint extender, chalk, paste, glue, and paper maché paste.

Sand and Water Area

Small tubs children can use in pairs, to facilitate dialogue.

Activity cards for making glycerin-based bubbles, performing water experiments with soap and dye, and casting sand prints with plaster.

Science and Nature Area

Reference books and activity cards with ideas for experiments.

Poster board and markers for charting scientific observations—for instance to graph the growth of plants, outline leaf shapes, or record changes in temperature.

Woodworking Area

Written (and illustrated) directions for carpentry projects.

Posted reminders for using tools safely.

Music Area

Words (or sheet music), librettos, and album notes for the CD's, albums, and tapes found in the area.

Blank note paper for children to write their own songs.

Blocks and Construction Area

Materials for making signs to go with constructions.

Blueprints and instructions for constructing buildings, bridges, and other architectural projects.

Board and Table Games Area

Word games such as Scrabble, Boggle, and Pictionary, plus written rules for playing all games.

Tables and chairs arranged so children can play and discuss games in small groups.

Math Area

Math teasers and word problems.

Paper and pencils children can use to record calculations and measurements.

Outdoors

A quiet place where children can independently and privately read or write using books and magazines and a portable writing kit (a basket filled with paper and writing implements).

Score cards for recreational games, plus written rules for reference.

Discuss your suggestions with your trainer and your colleagues.

Learning Activity IV.
Encouraging a Love of Reading

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- choose books that children will find interesting and appealing; and
- help children become lifelong readers.

Staff who love reading can instill similar feelings in children.

One of the greatest gifts school-age staff can give children is the ability to enjoy reading. Reading experts believe a love for reading develops when children are regularly read to, when they are shown the delights of poetry, and when trusted adults share special books with them. Staff who genuinely enjoy reading, who like to tell stories, and who appreciate the rhythms and rhymes of poetry, are able to instill these same feelings in children. When you lovingly hold a book while reading with a child, share a tidbit from a story to excite a child's interests, repeat a particularly appealing description because you like the way the words sound, and read a story with great enthusiasm and expression, you convey how valuable and thrilling you think books are.

Books can offer children answers and comfort.

When children discover that the experiences of characters in books are similar to their own, they seek out books for answers and comfort. This is one reason why it is important to include books in the program that reflect the children's cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Once children have the opportunity to see themselves in books, they can also find links to their own experiences that depict cultural backgrounds different than their own. By seeing that people who look differently than they do can share similar feelings, they vicariously experience the lives of many different people. Books link children to the past and offer them hope for the future.

Select books based on children's reading skills and interests.

Selecting appropriate books for children ages 5 to 12 may seem like a difficult task. Reading skills obviously vary greatly. Most 5-year-olds are just on the verge of reading while many 12-year-olds have reading skills equal to adults. Moreover, children of different ages also vary in their individual reading skills. One 7-year-old reader may stumble through books, reading words aloud with no expression. Another may read with the ease of a 12-year-old, taking on different voices as she reads a story aloud. Yet the

7-year-old with advanced reading skills is probably interested in the same kinds of books as the less-skilled reader who is also age 7, rather than books about teenagers that might interest a 12-year-old. Probably the best way to select books is to ask children what they like to read now, and what books they enjoyed when they were younger. With the limited resources that typify most school-age programs, staff need to be selective consumers. Some guidelines are presented here.

Picture books and "early readers" appeal to 5- to 7-year-olds.

Young school-age children (5 to 7 years) will enjoy many of the same books preschool children like. This is especially true of stories with humor or irony. Any of the picture books by Henry Allard about the silly Stupid family (*The Stupids Step Out, The Stupids Have A Ball),* for example, make many a 5- and 6-year-old double-over with laughter. Books known as "early readers" are, as their name implies, especially appropriate for children in this age group who are beginning readers. These books tend to be well illustrated to help children make the transition from what they see to what the printed word says. They also tend to be organized into chapters, like more advanced reading books. Many of these books are wonderful for shared reading experiences.

Many classics are enjoyed by 8- to 10-year-olds.

Many children's classics are aimed at 8- to 10-year-old children. Adventure stories, mysteries, fairytales, folktales, and chapter books make appealing and exciting reading. Even children who are less-skilled readers delight and benefit from listening to these stories read out loud. Stronger readers will want to read and reread these books over and over again themselves.

Older school-age children like reading about "real" people.

Older school-age children (11 to 12 years) like reading about the teenagers they will soon be. Plots dealing with romance, family relationships, and school are always appealing. Biographies and stories of beloved animal pets like Lassie or Misty tend to be popular with readers from one generation to the next. As children become more confident readers, they prefer books that are mostly text. Illustrations interfere with the reading experience once children no longer need picture cues. Similarly, older and better readers prefer black-and-white illustrations over the more distracting color ones.

Librarians and teachers can help select books.

Most school librarians or the children's librarian at your local library will be happy to assist in selecting books. Look, too, for books that are previous winners of the John Newberry and Randolph Caldecott Medals. These medals are awarded annually by a committee of children's librarians to the author of the "most distinguished contribution to American literature" (Newberry) and to the artist of the "most distinguished picture book for children"

(Caldecott). These books can be easily identified by the large metallic stickers on their jackets. Also, most newspapers publish a yearly or twice-yearly guide to children's books. These guides are particularly useful for keeping up with recent publications. It is also a good idea to find out what books children are reading at school. After the class has finished a book, it can be added to the program's library. Ask children for this information, or contact the teachers at the elementary school. Your outreach efforts will demonstrate the program's interest in establishing a partnership with the elementary school to support children's growth and learning.

Also, it's important to include books that build on field trips, clubs, or special activities offered in the program, and books that respond to problems experienced by children, such as moving to a new home or adjusting to divorce. Include some books of short stories as well. They tend to include fewer characters and simpler plots which make them more appealing to some children, particularly less skilled readers. Children may use short stories as the basis for developing skits and plays.

Provide a variety of general reference materials.

The program should also have some general reference materials of interest to school-age children of all ages, such as dictionaries (junior and more advanced editions), thesauruses, atlases, almanacs, and books of lists and facts like the *Guinness Book of World Records*, *Brown's Record Book of Weird and Wonderful Facts*, and *The Animals' Who's Who*. Also, provide nonfiction and "how to" books on a variety of subjects to build on children's experiences in different interest areas. For example, add books on inventions when children are busily engaged in their own experiments, books about dinosaurs when there is a flurry of interest in prehistoric times, and books on famous athletes for sports enthusiasts.

Consider these magazines and journals.

Magazines and special-interest journals provide reading materials that respond to children's interests and needs. Many can be purchased at bookstores, through subscriptions, or they may be available at the local library. The library will also have more information about each publication, who publishes it, and how to contact them. Some examples follow.

> ***American Girl Magazine***, is published bimonthly and is popular with girls ages 6 and up. It features stories, plays, activities, instructions on making arts and crafts, and articles on different people from around the world.

Boys' Life, published by the Boy Scouts of America, is aimed at boys ages 7 to 17. Articles cover a wide range of topics of interest to both boys and girls.

Cricket: The Magazine for Children introduces children ages 6 to 12 to some of the best literature and art from all over the world.

Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young Children addresses a different historical theme in each issue. Children ages 8 to 14 will enjoy the articles, photographs, games, and activities.

Dolphin Log is published bimonthly by The Cousteau Society. It brings together science, history, and the arts as they relate to oceans, marine biology and ecology, natural history, and more.

Games Junior includes challenging puzzles for children ages 6 to 12.

National Geographic World appeals to 8- to 14-year-olds. It includes fact-based stories on outdoor adventure, natural history, sports, games, and accomplishments of children.

Ranger Rick, a publication of the National Wildlife Federation, gives children ages 6 to 12 a greater understanding and appreciation for nature.

Sports Illustrated for Kids is aimed at children ages 8 to 13 who are especially interested in sports. Athletic accomplishments of both professionals and amateurs are featured.

3-2-1 Contact, a science and technology magazine, is published by the Children's Television Workshop. It features games, articles, puzzles, and fiction for children ages 8-14.

Zillions is a consumer-oriented publication for 8- to 14-year-olds. Readers learn to make informed decisions about purchases and to manage money responsibly.

Some newspapers and magazines distribute versions of their publications designed for children's use. Also, since most popular publications are written at the sixth to eighth grade reading level, older children may enjoy reading daily, weekly, or monthly newspapers and magazines. Newspapers and news magazines tend to include "all the news," some of which may be violent or upsetting. Ask parents which ones they think are appropriate to have on hand for their children.

Older children may enjoy newspapers and magazines.

Try these suggestions.

No matter what reading materials you select, be sure to provide children with both group and individual reading experiences, such as those described in Learning Activity II. In addition, here are some points to keep in mind:

- **Read aloud with children**. Even children who can read on their own enjoy being read to by an adult. Often, children can get caught up in raucously chanting repetitive phrases and adding cumulative dialogue to stories read in a group. If you sense a child of any age could use some close "together" time, sharing a book or magazine in the quiet area might be just the answer.
- **Encourage skilled readers to read to younger children**. Perhaps an arrangement could be made for the school-age children to read to young children at the local library or a nearby early childhood program.
- **Share the classic stories you enjoyed as a child**. They generally hold appeal for children of today as well. Younger school-age children will probably enjoy any of the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books by A. A. Milne or the series by Ruth Gannett that begins with *My Father's Dragon*. Other popular series include the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, which begins with *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Don't forget some new "classics" such as Ann Cameron's *The Stories Julian Tells* for younger children and Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins* for older children. Reading a chapter or two together at one sitting keeps children's attention and makes them look forward to continuing the book. You may need to keep a dictionary nearby to look up unfamiliar words—but this is part of the fun of reading classic literature.
- **Let children read to you as often as possible**. Beginning readers typically welcome a listening audience. Offer assistance when needed, but give beginning readers time to sound out letters and guess new words from their context. Even though it can try one's patience to wait for a child to say the appropriate word out loud, the more reading a child is able to do on his or her own, the more skilled a reader he or she will become.
- **Encourage children to regularly check books out of the library** so they can spend more time reading at their leisure. Also, let children know they don't have to finish a book if they don't like it. Stress that reading is a pleasure, not a chore.

- **Be a role model**. If you let children know how much you enjoy reading, you send them the message that reading is both pleasurable and something of value. You do this by asking children if they saw a particular article in the newspaper or by talking about the characters and plot of a book you just finished reading.
- **Play language and reading games**. Dorothy Rich, in the book *MegaSkills*, offers these suggestions:[2]

  Make up rhyming riddles: "What rhymes with cat and is used with balls?"

  Set up a mystery word box. Children can ask you to write down words they have no idea how to spell or define but appeal to them for some reason. They may be words a child has heard but doesn't know about (such as the Richter Scale) or funny sounding ones (such as onomatopoeia). As you print the word on an index card, discuss what the word means with the child and read it together. These mystery word cards can be stored in a file card box. These boxes become, in Rich's words, "a treasure house of favorite words."

  Plan a scavenger hunt with clues based on rhymes or other word games.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on promoting the reading skills of one child in your group. Think about what books the child is able to and interested in reading, then plan and implement a strategy for a shared reading experience. After trying out your idea, answer questions related to selecting and using a book with that child. Begin by reading the example that follows.

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[2] Based on Dorothy Rich, *MegaSkills: How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond* (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1988), pp. 160-164.

A Shared Reading Experience
(Example)

Child: *Marcus* **Age:** *7 years* **Date:** *February 5*

1. **List five books in the program's collection appropriate for this child's reading level.**

Up North in Winter by Deborah Hartley
In a Dark, Dark Room by Alvin Schwartz
The Shrinking of Treehorn by Florence Parry Heide
Frog and Toad Together by Arnold Lobel
Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss

2. **List five books in the program's collection that reflect this child's interests and needs.**

Dinnieabbiesister-r-r by Riki Levinson
Danny and the Dinosaur by Syd Hoff
The Book of Pigericks: Pig Limericks by Arnold Lobel
One At A Time by David McCord
Custard and Company by Ogden Nash

3. **Describe your strategy for sharing a book with this child and why you think it is appropriate.**

Marcus loves word games, rhymes, and silly poems, so I asked the children's librarian to recommend some books. She recommended the work of David McCord because he "plays with words like toys." I plan to introduce Marcus to the poem Bananas and Cream from the anthology One At A Time. I decided to use this poem because it's a silly rhyme, it can be chanted out loud, and it's about bananas—three things Marcus adores.

4. **Describe what happened when you shared a book with this child.**

I had Marcus read the poem to me. At first he stumbled, but as he got into the rhythm, his pace picked up. Next, I read the poem with Marcus, which he loved. He asked to read it together three more times. With each reading his voice got louder. I was worried we were getting too loud for the quiet area, so I suggested we take the book outside where we could recite the poem as loudly as we wished. Marcus liked this idea, so we went outside and chanted Bananas and Cream in the loudest speaking voices we had. Several other children came over to chant with us.

5. **What do you think the child got out of this activity?**

Marcus found a poem he can chant with abandon. In fact, he's almost memorized the entire poem. He's declared McCord a "jammin'" poet. His love of word play encourages him to read more—especially other lighthearted poems.

6. **How do you plan to build on this experience to further promote the child's reading experience?**

I'm going to ask the librarian for other suggestions. I'm also going to encourage Marcus and some of the other children who share his interest in silly poems and limericks to hold a poetry reading, and perhaps write their own poems.

A Shared Reading Experience

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

1. **List five books in the program's collection appropriate for this child's reading level.**

2. **List five books in the program's collection that reflect this child's interests and needs.**

3. **Describe your strategy for sharing a book with this child and why you think it is appropriate.**

4. **Describe what happened when you shared a book with this child.**

5. **What do you think the child got out of this activity?**

6. **How do you plan to build on this experience to further promote the child's reading experience?**

Discuss this activity with your trainer and the child's parents.

Learning Activity V.

Helping Children Communicate Their Ideas and Feelings

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- help children clarify their ideas and feelings; and
- interact with children in ways that encourage them to communicate their ideas and feelings.

Communicating ideas and feelings helps children feel in control of their lives.

The desire to share thoughts and feelings is a part of human nature for both children and adults. When Hannah's grandma died, she spent the afternoon huddled with her friends who listened and provided support. When Kyle won the third grade spelling bee, he announced it at group meeting. When Laura had an idea for a story, she spent the afternoon at the computer, then printed copies of her masterpiece for her friends and family. In fact, the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have stated that the ability to communicate thoughts and feelings is a lifelong literacy goal.

Language and literacy skills provide the tools for communicating in close, personal ways. Children who can read and write about their experiences, express ideas clearly and listen to responses, usually feel more capable and in control of their lives.

Talk to children and encourage them to write.

Talking to children about what they are thinking and feeling is perhaps the best way to help them express their thoughts. Encouraging children to write down these thoughts enables children to see how much they really know. Asking children to continue writing even after they are convinced they have nothing more to say, encourages them to reflect further on their thoughts and feelings. When they write more, children think and learn more, as this example illustrates:

> After listening to some 9- and 10-year-olds argue about which baseball players to include on an all-star team, Ms. Hsiao suggests the children write about and explain their choices. She challenges them to support their choices by including each player's strengths and weaknesses. After writing a description of his ideal team, Pavel turns to Ms. Hsiao and says, "I know more about baseball than I thought I did!"

When children put their thoughts and feelings into words, they learn to make sense of the events affecting their lives. Sometimes they need adults to step in to prompt them to express their feelings. An example follows:

> Martin was about to move over 1,000 miles away. Mr. Thomas suggested he read a book about how a boy his age handled his family's move to a new community. Reading the book helped Martin understand his feelings about his family's upcoming move. He read and reread a passage in the book about what the boy was afraid of and found comfort in how the boy dealt with his fears. The book helped him articulate his own fears so the school-age staff and his family were able to help him get through this difficult time.

Through daily activities, the school-age program can encourage children to use their skills to share their ideas and thoughts with others. For example, the group meeting is an ideal format for using verbal skills to express and defend personal opinions. Providing a variety of writing materials encourages children to express their thoughts in writing. A schedule that allows ample time for free choice gives children time to develop close and supportive friendships.

Staff should also take advantage of snack and outdoor times to communicate with children one-on-one or in small groups. Private moments during the day lend themselves to sharing thoughts and feelings.

Help children notice and understand nonverbal behaviors.

Another way to help children learn to communicate effectively is to make them aware of their own nonverbal behaviors. Like adults, school-age children use a variety of body language—slouching, averting eye contact, shrugging, drumming fingers, crossing arms—that unconsciously communicates messages to others. You can help children understand how these nonverbal gestures affect others and help them recognize when they are using them. This recognition and understanding allows children to think about and plan their nonverbal messages just as they think about their verbal ones. An example follows:

> Mr. Prescott intervenes to help April, a very competitive athlete, understand the messages she communicates through her body language. "April, I've noticed you roll your eyes and turn your back when one of your teammates strikes out or misses a catch. The children recognize these gestures as signs

you are disappointed with them. They feel angry and resentful towards you, which leads to bickering and no one has fun playing the game." April responds, "That's exactly what I was thinking, but I didn't mean for the others to know what was on my mind. I didn't want to hurt their feelings." The next time a teammate strikes out April catches herself before she rolls her eyes. She relaxes and tries to focus on enjoying the game.

Teach children to use "I" messages to communicate their feelings.

Another important communication technique you can introduce to children is the use of "I" messages. Such messages begin with the word "I" and describe personal feelings: for example, you might say, "I feel angry when . . .," rather than "you make me feel . . ." They encourage the speaker to assume responsibility for his or her feelings rather than blaming someone else, and they defuse tense situations. If children use "I" messages when discussing a conflict, communication is likely to be more effective and lead to solutions that are mutually acceptable. It is easy to describe this technique, but very difficult to learn to use it consistently. Children will need many reminders from staff and from each other: "Use your 'I' messages." Children who master this technique will gain a valuable communication tool they can use in many situations and relationships throughout their lives.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on a child in your program who seems to have difficulty communicating his or her ideas and feelings. Describe the child's skills, then develop strategies for helping the child gain the skills needed to express him or herself. Begin by reviewing the example that follows.

Helping Children Communicate Their Ideas and Feelings

(Example)

Child: *Conrad* **Age:** *9 years* **Date:** *October 22*

Describe this child's communication skills:

Conrad is enthusiastic about many activities, but he shies away from reading and writing because he is not very skilled at either. Several of the children his age in the program are extremely adept readers and writers, which turns Conrad off to these activities even more. He does, however, like group storytelling and participates in this activity.

What strategies can you use to help this child communicate his or her ideas and feelings? (State at least six.)

Regularly sit with and have private discussions with Conrad. I plan to use lots of open-ended questions that will encourage him to express himself.

Ask the children's librarian to suggest some books about children who have difficulty with school. We can read these together so Conrad doesn't feel so alone.

Encourage Conrad to participate more frequently in drama activities and perhaps to join the Drama Club.

Have Conrad dictate ideas and stories into a tape recorder which I'll then type up. Conrad doesn't know how to type. This way he'll get to see his thoughts in polished form. It will also let him know I value what he has to say.

Encourage Conrad to use the computer tutorial to learn to type.

Team Conrad (if he is interested) with a good writer to co-author a column for the newsletter.

Helping Children Communicate Their Ideas and Feelings

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Describe this child's communication skills:

What strategies can you use to help this child communicate his or her ideas and feelings? (State at least six.)

Discuss this activity with your trainer and colleagues who also work with this child.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills in promoting children's communication. Before you go on, take a few minutes to summarize what you've learned.

- Turn back to Learning Activity I, Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Promote Communication Skills. Add specific examples to the charts of what you learned about promoting children's communication skills during the time you were working on this module. Compare your ideas to those in the completed charts at the end of the module.
- Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Promoting Children's Communication

Creating an Interesting and Varied Environment That Encourages Children to Develop and Use Communication Skills

1. **How did Ms. Alessi build on Jonathan's interests to promote communication skills?**
   - a. When she overheard him talking to his friend, she asked him for details about the trip to the museum.
   - b. She enthusiastically responded to his comments about dinosaurs, letting him know she thought what he had to say was both important and interesting.
2. **In what ways did Ms. Alessi provide an environment that encouraged communication skills?**
   - a. She suggested Jonathan use the computer and publishing software to write his story.
   - b. She told him where he could find drawing and bookbinding supplies if he wanted to "publish" his story.

Interacting with Children in Ways That Encourage Them to Communicate Their Thoughts and Feelings

1. **How did Ms. Kearney know something was bothering Stuart?**
   - a. Stuart's mother had said her husband was away on business for a month—so Ms. Kearney was on the lookout for any signs Stuart might be having problems.
   - b. She observed a significant change in his block-building activity.
2. **How did Ms. Kearney help Stuart express his feelings and thoughts?**
   - a. She engaged him in conversation.
   - b. She compared the way his block structures looked to the way he might be feeling.
   - c. She gave him words he could apply to his feelings.
   - d. She suggested writing a letter to his father.
   - e. She sat with him at his request.

3. What other questions might Ms. Kearney have asked to draw out Stuart?

Many other questions are possible. They should encourage Stuart to express his feelings in words. Here are some examples:

a. "Is something going on today, Stuart? You didn't seem to be building in your usual spirited style."

b. "What special mood are you conveying through your building?"

c. "Is anything bothering you at home or at school? You haven't seemed your usual self these past few days?"

Providing Opportunities for Children to Use Their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills

1. What did Mr. Williams do to interest the children in writing stories?

a. He sponsored a Writer's Workshop.

b. He solicited the children's input.

c. He shared a personal story with the children.

d. He assured the children they all had something valuable to contribute.

2. How did the Writer's Workshop promote the children's language and literacy skills?

a. It focused children's thinking on the elements of a good story.

b. It showed children how to draw on their own experiences to tell a story.

c. It gave children a plan for selecting what they wanted to write about.

d. It gave children confidence in their ability to put together a literary journal.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills
They are interested in the meaning of words.	Provide junior editions of dictionaries and encourage children to use them. Maintain a mystery word box to record and respond to children's questions.
They ask seemingly endless questions.	Model good listening skills. Respond in ways that help children focus their thoughts.
They enjoy engaging others in conversations.	Provide space and opportunities for socializing; for example, while playing board and table games and during water play or dramatic play. Participate in conversations with children so they will learn to take turns talking and to respond to what others say.
They like to provide rich details when describing things or events.	Respond enthusiastically to children's descriptions so they know you appreciate their use of rich language. Show children how to use a thesaurus or a book of synonyms so they can find just the right adjectives or adverbs. Model expressive language: "The colors in Tad's shirt are so bright they're almost blinding."
They can be intolerant of people who speak with different accents or languages.	Use individual discussions and group meetings to emphasize the need to respect differences. Be sure the program includes a variety of multicultural and anti-bias materials that teach children respect for others.
They recognize grammatical mistakes.	Model correct standard grammar and praise children's efforts to correct themselves.

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills
They often exaggerate, boast, and tell tall tales.	Channel children's urges into storytelling activities. Share with literature of this genre. Have an indoor or outdoor picnic at which children tell tall tales and ghost stories.
Their language skills may vary greatly from those of their peers.	Individualize materials and activities to meet children's varying skills. Provide reading and writing materials and software that accommodate varied skill levels.
They like to socialize with friends.	Suggest children form clubs—newspaper, great books, autobiography—with children who have similar interests. Provide plenty of time in the schedule for free choice so children can interact with their friends.
They like coded languages and passwords.	Encourage children to use codes in making up games or developing a secret language they can teach others. Provide books and materials on secret codes used for espionage. Show children how to use invisible ink to write messages.
They can think critically.	Provide challenging problems children can solve on paper or on the computer or through experimentation. Reinforce the scientific method to solve problems. Involve children in planning program activities, selecting materials, resolving conflicts, and making rules. Use group meeting times as opportunities to discuss and analyze current issues.
They can verbalize their ideas and feelings.	Ask lots of open-ended questions to encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings. Suggest children keep daily journals. Encourage children to share their ideas with others. Teach children to be respectful while their peers are talking.
They may begin to use slang and profanity.	Involve children in setting program rules regarding use of language. For example, slang (if it's not about bodily functions or hurtful) is acceptable, but profanity is not.

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Communication Skills
They often can speak with the fluency of adults.	Provide lots of opportunities for children to develop and refine their speaking skills—for example, leading group meetings, putting on plays, expressing their ideas to others, describing an experiment, reciting poetry, and recording stories or poems on tape.
They may question rules and beliefs they previously accepted.	Use group meetings as a time for open discussion of rules and beliefs. Encourage children to use conflict resolution techniques to resolve problems. Ask children to put their concerns in writing—for example, an explanation of why they think a rule is unfair along with a proposed alternative.
They may be self-centered and self-critical.	Accept this is normal for children at this stage of development. Encourage children to record their private thoughts in journals. Suggest they use the computer for writing so it is easier to make revisions.
They like to speak in complex sentences.	Encourage children's efforts without correcting their misuse of words. Expose them to books on tape and tapes of famous speeches such as Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.
They like thinking about abstract concepts.	Encourage children to research or debate ideas related to topics such as freedom, bigotry, greed, or heroism. Sponsor a Debating Club and introduce children to some simple debating rules.
They use a lot of slang and "fad" words and sometimes use profanity as a way to identify with their peers.	Set and uphold clear standards for language use at the program—profanity is never appropriate. Accept children's use of slang and fad words, without using them yourself. Model standard use of language in conversations with children and adults. Introduce children to new vocabulary words that mean the same thing as the slang words.

GLOSSARY

Communication	The act of expressing and sharing ideas, desires, and feelings.
Cumulative books	Those that build on the previous page's text by adding a new line to the repeated lines.
Language	A system of words and rules for their use in speaking, reading, and writing.
Literacy	A set of tools for communicating and learning, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
Nonverbal communication	The act of conveying feelings or ideas without using words.
Predictable books	Those with plots that are easy for readers to guess what will happen next .
Reading skills	Visual and perceptual skills needed to read, including following sequences from left to right and recognizing differences and similarities among things.
Repetitive books	Those that repeat certain words and phases.
Shared reading	A group reading experience resembling choral reading—everyone reads a story out loud together.
Skills approach	A method of teaching reading in which children use word attack skills as decoders.
Whole language	A method of teaching reading and writing which emphasizes reading, writing, and oral language across the curriculum, teaching skills in context rather than as isolated units of information.

NOTES

Teaching Strategies, Inc. strives to improve the quality of early childhood programs by producing comprehensive and practical curriculum and training materials. Our products and staff development services are making a difference in public and private schools, Head Start, and in child care programs nationwide.

Competency-Based Training Materials

The "*Caring for . . .*" series:

Caring for Infants and Toddlers
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Volume II

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Many individuals contributed to the development of these training materials. First, we would like to acknowledge M.-A. Lucas, Chief of Army Child and Youth Services, who recognized the important role school-age programs play in the lives of children and initiated the development of this training. Next, we want to thank Dr. Victoria Moss, Program Manager, Supplemental Programs and Services, Department of the Army, who guided the development of the training modules and provided us with constructive and helpful suggestions that greatly improved the program. In addition, we are grateful to P. K. Tomlinson and Linda Harwanko, Education Program Specialists, Department of the Army, who reviewed and gave extensive feedback on the modules. The following Service representatives also reviewed and provided input that enriched these training materials: Keith Painter, Recreation Specialist, Department of the Army; Carolee Van Horn, Community Recreation Specialist, Department of the Navy; Madeline Wagner, Communication Recreation Specialist, The Marine Corps; and Mary Alice Howe, Child Development and Youth Specialist, Department of the Air Force. Dr. Charles H. Flatter, Professor, Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland, provided us with initial guidance on the development of the modules.

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs was reviewed by Ellen Gannett, Associate Director, and Susan O'Connor, Research Associate, School-Age Child Care Project at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College. Their critique of each module and suggestions for enhancing the content were invaluable. Ellen and Susan also verified the linkages between this training program and the criteria outlined in *Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality.* We are indebted to each of them for taking a strong interest in this project and sharing their expertise so generously.

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It is our hope that as school-age staff undertake this training program they will gain knowledge and develop new skills that will allow them to offer the highest quality of programming. We also hope this training will lead to greater understanding of how school-age programs encourage and support children's development, allow them to explore and build on their interests, and help them grow into competent, independent, and productive citizens.

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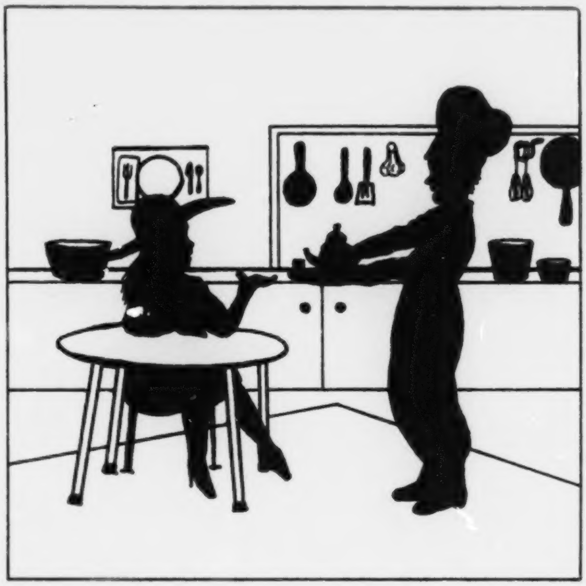

Module 7: CREATIVE

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OVERVIEW

PROMOTING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY INVOLVES:

- providing a rich and varied environment that invites exploration and experimentation;
- offering a variety of activities and experiences that promote self-expression; and
- interacting with children in ways that encourage and respect original ideas, thoughts, and expressions.

Children who are creative are willing to try new ways of doing things. They see more than one possibility in how to play a game or use an art material. They are curious about how things work and why things happen as they do. They are willing to take risks. When they try something new and it doesn't work, they learn from their mistakes, and try another approach.

There are many ways to define creativity.

The definitions of creativity are many and varied. Some say it is the process of creating, others say it is the product of creative efforts. According to Teresa Amabile, a social psychologist who has studied children's creativity, anything a child does or says can be considered creative if it meets two criteria. The first is **novelty**: it must be substantially different from—rather than an imitation or repetition of—something the child has seen or heard before. The second is **appropriateness**: it should be correct, useful toward achieving a goal, appealing, or meaningful to the child in some way.[1] Thus, the cook who follows a recipe exactly is not using creativity; the cook who experiments by adding new ingredients is.

In attempting to define creativity, it might be helpful to first consider what it is not, rather than what it is. Creativity is not the same as high intelligence. Many people of average intelligence are highly creative. Creativity is not the same as talent. Many talented people are skilled performers; however, they are not all creative. Creativity is not the same as being eccentric. Creative people often do things in different ways; however, this does not mean they are unbalanced or suffer from mental illness. People often equate creativity with high intelligence, talent, and eccentricity. Some creative people have these characteristics; however, many do not.

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[1] Teresa Amabile, *Recognizing Children's Creativity* (NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989), p. 25.

Children maintain creative behaviors when their creativity is supported and valued by adults.

Everyone is born with the ability to be creative. Some children are more creative than others and children use and express their creativity in different ways. When they enter the school-age years, most children are eager learners, naturally imaginative and creative. They learn by doing as they interact with people and things in their environment. Whether they maintain this ability depends, in part, on whether their creative behaviors are valued and encouraged by parents, teachers, and others. Some children remain highly creative even when their behavior is not reinforced. Their drive to be creative is far greater than their drive to conform to accepted norms.

School-age children use their skills and talents in creative ways.

School-age children can use all their skills—cognitive, language, physical, socio-emotional—in creative pursuits. In fact, almost everything they do involves creativity: they make up jokes, work on open-ended craft projects, plan and carry out their ideas for drawings, design and conduct experiments, and make up new rules for traditional games. They can be excellent problem solvers and often resolve their own disagreements. In addition, children in this age group may have special talents and interests they want to explore in creative ways.

The relationships between children and staff are the foundation for nurturing creativity. When children feel secure, they are likely to explore and express themselves. Staff support children's creativity by including a variety of interesting materials in the environment that encourage children to explore and experiment. They plan activities that provide opportunities for self-expression and support children's interest and involvement in activities they plan themselves. Finally, they demonstrate respect for children's original ideas, thoughts, and expressions.

Listed on the next page are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in promoting children's creativity.

Providing a Rich and Varied Environment That Invites Exploration and Experimentation

Provide open-ended materials with which children can do many things. "Francie, we've had these styrofoam squiggles all year, but you're the first one to think of using them to make jewelry."

Arrange the environment so children can spread out, explore, and be messy. "Kyle and Tim, your paper maché mountain is enormous. Would you like me to help you move it to the hobby area? There's plenty of room there for you to work."

Provide sufficient storage space for projects and creations that cannot be completed in one day. "Your display of rocks and shells is impressive. You can store it on the hobby shelf overnight; tomorrow, you can work on it again."

Allow creations to stay in place for several days so children can continue using them and possibly expand them. "We'll save the store you and André made so you can play in it tomorrow."

Provide sufficient time in the daily schedule for children to make plans and carry them out. "Carol and Mia spent every afternoon this week planning and rehearsing their gymnastics show."

Follow a daily schedule that includes long blocks of time when children are free to organize their own games and activities without adult involvement. "Ms. Harper, have you noticed the children playing 'space travelers?' Every day they gather props, head for the playground, and use the climber as a space ship."

Surround children with examples of creative work—reproductions of paintings and sculptures, award-winning children's literature, photographs of architectural treasures, biographies of inventors and scientists, a wide variety of music on tapes and CDs. "We just got a new biography of Buckminster Fuller, the man who invented the geodesic dome. He began his work in kindergarten when he made triangular structures using toothpicks and peas!"

Store materials and equipment where children can easily select, replace, and care for them without adult assistance. "There are lots of materials in the board and games area you can use to make up games. They're in the tote box on the shelf."

Offer materials that allow children to explore subjects and interests introduced at school or through experiences such as field trips. "Seth, you seemed to enjoy the presentation on meteorology. Would you like to do some research and find out how you can track rainfall here?"

Offering a Variety of Activities and Experiences That Promote Self-Expression

Encourage children to express their ideas and feelings. "Thanks for your suggestion, Paula. I agree, it would be easier to keep the guinea pig cage clean if we had a screen bottom. Does anyone have an idea about how we could make one?"

Offer activities that introduce new ideas and allow children to develop and carry out their own plans. "Now that I've told you about Rube Goldberg, does anyone want to make their own labor-saving invention? There's a box of recycled 'junk' in the science and nature area you can use for your creations."

Extend younger children's dramatic play. "I could really use a shave and a haircut. Do I need an appointment or is this a 'walk-in' hair salon?"

Introduce children to brainstorming so they can use it as a problem-solving tool. "Brainstorming is a way to think of new ideas. Each pair will have five minutes to write down all the possible uses for a paper towel they can think of. All ideas will be accepted—none are right or wrong. Tomorrow, we'll use brainstorming to think of a way to make space for our new aquarium."

Plan a variety of activities that introduce children to drama, dance, music, art, literature, film, and the many forms of visual art—for example, painting, drawing, sculpture. "Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. Today we're going to read some examples. Maybe some of you will want to write your own haiku."

Help children develop specific skills they can use in their creative work. "Now that you've mastered the techniques for doing cross stitch, would you like to learn to design your own patterns?"

Respond to children's ideas for projects and activities. "That's a great idea! What materials will you need to turn the loft into a two-story restaurant?"

Avoid using coloring books, pre-packaged craft projects, and dittos. "The art shelf has lots of supplies—papers, markers, pens, crayons, paste, yarn, string, scissors, and collage items."

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage and Respect Original Ideas, Thoughts, and Expressions

Value the characteristics that make each child a unique individual. "Steven, I'm always interested in hearing your ideas. You have a special way of looking at things and lots of times your unusual solutions are the ones that work best."

Help children understand it takes hard work and practice to develop their talents. "Thank you for sharing your science fiction story with me. I enjoyed reading it. If you're interested, I have a few suggestions for expanding the plot."

Encourage children to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and try again. "Hannah took pictures of her friends from lots of different angles. Some of her pictures came out and some didn't. Next time she's going to experiment with different exposures."

Invite children to display or share the products of their creative work. "Camille, we've been admiring the weavings you made from vines and dried grass. Would you like to choose one we can hang on the wall?"

Call attention to sensory experiences. "How does it feel when the clay moves under your hands as the pottery wheel spins round and round? Is it a different feeling when you press down with your thumbs?"

Ask a variety of questions that encourage children to think about things in new ways. "What might life be like if we could fly?" "If you had a time machine would you go back in time or forward?"

Accept and value each child's unique creative expression. "Jamal, you've invented a lot of knots for your tie-dye project. I can't wait to see the designs they make on your shirt."

Model creativity by sharing your interests, taking risks, and solving problems. "I've been teaching myself carpentry. These are some pictures of a table I made."

Promoting School-Age Children's Creativity

In the following situations, school-age staff are promoting children's creativity. As you read, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Providing a Rich and Varied Environment That Invites Exploration and Experimentation

Jessica and Cassandra are telling Ms. Andrews about some abandoned birds' nests they found on a recent hiking trip. They are impressed with how the birds made their nests by combining vines, twigs, and grasses with "manmade" items such as paper and bits of cloth. Ms. Andrews asks, "Would you like to weave like the birds?" Cassandra says, "That would be fun. Let's make something. I know where I can get some twigs and other stuff." Jessica replies, "I'll help, too. Where can we store our materials and work on our projects?" Ms. Andrews suggests the arts and crafts area. Several children overhear and ask if they can weave too. "Sure," says Jessica. "Let's make a list of the things we need."

During the next week the children collect items from nature—branches, seed pods, vines, dried weeds, and flowers—and a variety of scrap materials—string, buttons, plastic-covered wire, and yarn. By the end of the week, the collection is taking over the arts and crafts area. They decide they have enough!

Next, they sort the items using separate dishpans for each type of material. They place the dishpans on the shelves, display samples of the materials on the bulletin board, and set aside a table for weaving projects. Ms. Andrews suggests keeping "works in progress" on a shelf out of the way of the younger children who use the room during the school day. Over the next week, children explore and experiment as they weave baskets, wall hangings, jewelry, and even miniature hammocks.

1. How did Ms. Andrews involve the children in creating a rich and varied environment?

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2. How do open-ended materials promote creativity?

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Offering a Variety of Activities and Experiences That Promote Self-Expression

Last week Ms. Ramos overheard two sixth graders, Alex and Brianna, continuing a discussion begun in school about whether there could be life on other planets. Their conversation reminded her of a project from her own sixth grade science class—learning about conditions on other planets and making a "being" that could possibly live on one. She explained the project to Alex and Brianna and asked if they would like to help her plan a similar activity. Both children said, "Yes!"

Today, Ms. Ramos introduces the activity at a group meeting. She asks Alex and Brianna to share what they know about life on other planets. Next, the children look at books about other planets in our solar system. They ask lots of questions and share with each other what they find out through their explorations. Ms. Ramos brings out a box of recycled items and arts and crafts supplies. She suggests the children work in pairs or threes to create a being that could live on one of the planets they've learned about.

As the children work, Ms. Ramos asks thought-provoking questions. "Would a being from another planet need eyes and ears like humans do? Would it be a he, a she, or an it? Would it have legs? Would it move at all?" Denise responds, "Our being just looks like a weird human. We're going to start over." Some children finish their beings that afternoon, others want to continue working on them. Ms. Ramos shows them a place on the shelf where they can store their projects.

1. Why did Ms. Ramos plan this activity?

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2. What did Ms. Ramos do to encourage the children's creativity?

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Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage and Respect Original Ideas, Thoughts, and Expressions

Mr. Ryan announces there will be a dodge ball game outdoors today. In the program, they use a Nerf ball to make the game safe. He overhears Ginny say to her friend Renée, "I hate that game. Once you're out there's nothing to do." Renée responds, "I hate it, too. I'm always out first." Mr. Ryan approaches the girls and asks them to tell him more about why they don't like dodge ball. After listening to their concerns he says, "Well, you have some good points. It's hard to get better at playing dodge ball if you have to leave the game as soon as you are hit. Do you have any ideas for making up a new kind of dodge ball that would be more fun to play?" Ginny quickly answers, "I do. We could play that you're only out until someone else gets 'Nerfed.' Then that person would come out and you'd get to go back in." Renée adds, "So you'd never be out of the game for more than a minute or two." Mr. Ryan compliments the girls on their new kind of dodge ball. He says, "Let's talk to the rest of the group about your idea."

1. How did Mr. Ryan interact with the children to encourage creative thinking?

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2. How did Mr. Ryan demonstrate respect for the children's ideas?

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Creativity

We sometimes confuse creativity with talent.

As adults, we sometimes confuse creativity with talent. Creative people are innovative and resourceful. They can take an idea, a plan, or an object and adapt it to make something new. Although some people are more creative than others, everyone has creative abilities they use on the job and at home. Artists, musicians, architects, and writers are all creative people—but so are cooks, secretaries, lawyers, plumbers, and school-age staff. You don't have to be able to paint a picture or write a book to be creative. Thinking of new ways to help children learn to negotiate, making up a song to sing on a field trip, or rearranging your space to create a cozy reading area are all examples of creativity.

Understanding your own creativity and how you approach problems and new situations will help you become sensitive to creativity in children. Recognizing how you feel when you are being creative will help you support children as they try out new ideas.

Think about the satisfaction you feel when you solve a problem while cooking, gardening, reading, talking with a friend, or planning new activities. That feeling is similar to the pride children feel when they have figured something out for themselves.

Here are some exercises you can do to help stimulate your own creative thinking.

How do you get to work each day? Can you think of an alternative route or mode of transportation to get to work?

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Think of some unusual ways to use a common object—for example, an egg carton, a newspaper, a pencil, or a suitcase.

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Think of three ways to make a sandwich without using bread.

Describe something you did with children that was very creative.

Describe something creative you did last week at home, in a relationship, at work, or anywhere else.

These questions or similar ones can help you think of new ways to approach a problem. They can also be useful in helping children develop their creativity. Supporting children's creativity is one of your major tasks—and one that gives much satisfaction in return, as you watch children gain in self-confidence and enthusiastically move out into the world.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of the module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to promote children's creativity. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Providing a Rich and Varied Environment That Invites Exploration and Experimentation	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Providing open-ended materials with which children can do many things.	☐	☐	☐
2. Arranging the environment so children can spread out, explore, and be messy.	☐	☐	☐
3. Providing sufficient storage space for projects and creations that cannot be completed in one day.	☐	☐	☐
4. Allowing creations to remain in place for several days so children can continue using them and perhaps expand them.	☐	☐	☐
5. Following a daily schedule that includes long blocks of time when children are free to organize their own games and activities without adult involvement.	☐	☐	☐
6. Providing sufficient time in the daily schedule for children to make plans and carry them out.	☐	☐	☐
7. Surrounding children with examples of creative work.	☐	☐	☐
8. Storing materials and equipment where children can easily select, replace, and care for them without adult assistance.	☐	☐	☐
9. Offering materials that allow children to explore subjects and interests introduced at school or through experiences such as field trips.	☐	☐	☐

Offering a Variety of Activities and Experiences That Promote Self-Expression

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Encouraging children to express their ideas and feelings.	☐	☐	☐
11. Offering activities that allow children to develop and carry out their own plans.	☐	☐	☐
12. Extending younger children's dramatic play.	☐	☐	☐
13. Introducing children to brainstorming so they can use it as a problem-solving tool.	☐	☐	☐
14. Planning a variety of activities that introduce children to the visual and expressive arts.	☐	☐	☐
15. Helping children develop specific skills they can use in their creative work.	☐	☐	☐
16. Responding to children's ideas for projects and activities.	☐	☐	☐
17. Avoiding the use of coloring books, prepackaged craft projects, and dittos.	☐	☐	☐

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage and Respect Original Thoughts, Ideas, and Expression

18. Valuing the characteristics that make each child a unique individual.	☐	☐	☐
19. Helping children understand it takes hard work and practice to develop their talents.	☐	☐	☐
20. Encouraging children to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and try again.	☐	☐	☐
21. Inviting children to display or share the results of their creative work.	☐	☐	☐

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage and Respect Original Thoughts, Ideas, and Expression (continued)	I Do This Regularly	 Sometimes	 Not Enough
22. Calling attention to sensory experiences.	☐	☐	☐
23. Asking a variety of questions that encourage children to think about things in new ways.	☐	☐	☐
24. Accepting and valuing each child's unique creative expression.	☐	☐	☐
25. Modeling creativity by sharing your own interests, taking risks, and solving problems.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

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Begin the learning activities for Module 7, Creative.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Encourage Creativity

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical behaviors of school-age children; and
- use what you know about children to encourage their creativity.

Many experts on creativity believe children are most creative during the preschool years. Preschoolers have vivid imaginations. They tend to be very curious and adept at solving problems that arise from their curiosity. Frequently their parents and teachers value and encourage these skills.

When children reach kindergarten, however, they face new challenges such as learning to pay attention at appropriate times. This is an important skill; however, children also need to continue using their creativity. School-age programs can give children many opportunities to explore their interests, investigate their world, and make discoveries. The environment you establish and the ways in which you interact with and respond to children can let them know you value creativity. What you say, how you ask and answer questions, and the ways in which you encourage exploration all nurture children's creativity. Careful listening to what a child has to say and recognizing each child as an individual are crucial. Your enthusiasm for children's efforts and successes will greatly support their creativity. Children will learn that creativity is an important part of life.

5- to 7-Year-Old Children

Children 5- to 7-years old ask a lot of questions and really want to know the answers. They are learning to read, write, and understand beginning concepts used in arithmetic and science. They use these skills in their creative work—writing and illustrating stories, weighing or measuring objects, then making a display of their results, doing simple experiments to test their predictions or to answer their own questions. Children this age are acquiring the ability to work through problems in their minds.

During these years, children double their vocabularies and can express their thoughts and feelings—often using great and vivid detail. They enjoy learning new words and use them in creative—but not always accurate—ways. Staff can introduce metaphors and analogies as they describe their own experiences and feelings. "When everyone rushes at once to get out to the playground, I feel like I'm in a huge, confusing traffic jam. How does it make you feel?" Word association games are another way to introduce new words. "When I say 'freeze,' what other words come to mind?" "Can anyone make up a sentence using all of these words—sugar, computer, and rain?"

Many 5- to 7-year-olds have active imaginations. They express their creative ideas through dramatic play, making good use of costumes and props to invent games and scenarios that last for several days. Prop boxes that reflect children's interests and/or give them a chance to further explore an experience are popular with this age group. For example, after the bus breaks down on the way from school, children might use a mechanic prop box to reenact and build on the experience. Staff can extend children's play by assuming roles and joining in "pretend" conversations.

Most children in this age group love to paint, draw, glue things together, or manipulate a lump of clay. These are relaxing activities that stimulate all the senses and allow children to use their imaginations as they create something of their own. They explore fresh ways of using familiar art materials—paints, playdough and clay, crayons, and markers—and they use new materials such as Plaster of Paris and colored chalk. Children enjoy arts and crafts experiences because these are relaxed, comfortable times when they can move at their own pace.

Like preschoolers, young school-age children enjoy the process of creating—making up a dance, inventing characters for a story, hammering nails into a wooden board. They are, however, becoming increasingly interested in the products that result from their creative efforts. They take great pleasure in making things that can actually be used (a potholder), displayed (a weaving), read (a poem), taught to someone else (a part in a play), or performed (a dance routine).

8- to 10-Year-Old Children

By this age children have developed many skills they can use in creative efforts. For example, their increased fine motor skills allow them to do more complex arts and crafts activities; they have the social skills needed to work with others; they understand how some concepts relate to one another; and they can apply their reading, writing, and arithmetic skills as they make step-by-step plans and carry them out.

Children this age may become intensely interested and involved in a specific activity or topic. They often pursue these "passions" on their own and through special interest clubs. For example, Daniel is fascinated by building things, spending every afternoon for three weeks creating a city of the future. Miguel loves to draw cartoon figures and spends every afternoon perfecting his version of a cartoon character. In a month's time these children may drop their city of the future and cartoon projects and throw themselves into new endeavors. Staff need to observe children to know when it's time to provide for their changing interests.

As they become increasingly independent of adults, 8- to 10-year-olds enjoy being with friends and participating in group activities. Spontaneous dramatic play activities may become planned skits and plays. Such activities can build children's confidence and help them feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Some children in this age group are extremely self-critical and look to others for encouragement and approval. At times, even the approval of others will not convince them of the value of their creations, and they may destroy them or throw them away. In these instances, staff can urge them to start again. These "perfectionists" may need help learning to enjoy and value the process of creating. Staff can let them know it's okay to take risks—taking risks is how people learn. These children may also need help establishing realistic goals. "Walter, painting a mural by yourself is a big job. Perhaps you might ask some of your friends to work with you."

Children's increased small muscle coordination and control allow them to explore a wide variety of art media and learn the skills and techniques used in calligraphy, macramé, silk screening, wood block printing, rug hooking, or mask making. This age group focuses on both the process and the products of their creative efforts. As they get older, children want to develop skills and competencies that lead to real accomplishments. The "products"—drawings, weavings, macramé plant hangers—provide children with "evidence" of their competence. Children like making objects that can be displayed simply because they are beautiful, interesting, or unusual and making items that are both attractive and practical—crocheted or woven clothing, tie-dye shirts, leather-tooled belts, or clay vases.

11- to 12-Year-Old Children

Some of the behaviors that characterize children in this age group can both contribute to and detract from their creativity. Their desires to be independent from adults and their rapidly expanding academic skills and knowledge can introduce them to new interests, stimulate curiosity, and encourage experimentation and discovery. Conversely, their strong attachment to and identification with their peer group, can lead them to conform with the behaviors and activities the group deems appropriate.

School-age staff can promote creativity by letting children know it is all right to be different, to explore their own interests, and to define themselves as individuals as well as group members. They can harness the power of the peer group by encouraging children to get involved in creative group efforts such as producing skits, plays, and videos. These activities allow children to apply their unique talents within the group. Individual children can contribute by writing scripts, designing and making costumes, directing the "actors," building stage sets, or making posters to advertise the production.

Many children in this age group show proficiency in particular areas and want to further develop their skills and talents. The program can provide time, space, and resources so children can fully develop their talents. It may be possible to arrange for dance, theater, and music specialists to "teach" classes at the program. Or, program staff might coordinate with parents so children can attend classes in the community.

These "almost teenagers" experience strong feelings such as sadness and joy in a deep way, much as adults do. They may express their feelings through many forms of media: art, music, drama, dance, writing, and photography.

Some children in this age group define themselves through popular culture—magazines, music, dancing, television, movies. It is important for staff to understand and accept that this age group's interest in popular culture is related to their need to be independent and in touch with their peers. They need time and space to pursue these interests without adult interference. Staff can expose children to a wide range of cultural offerings so they will be aware of the many different ways people express their creativity.

This age group is particularly interested in popular music and may bring their own tapes and CDs to the program. The lyrics to some songs are controversial and might be considered offensive and inappropriate. It's important to work with parents and children to set standards and guidelines related to the music children bring to the program.

Many 11- to 12-year-olds are eager to assume leadership roles and responsibility. School-age programs can address this need by asking children to apply their creativity to program planning and operations. Staff can encourage children's creative thinking by asking: "What activities would you plan if you were in charge of the program for a day?" "Is there another way to do this?" "How can we find out what children really want to do at the program?"

Like 8- to 10-year-olds, this age group continues to focus on both the process and products of creative work. They want the outcomes of their work to be viewed as "good" and may spend a lot of time planning, creating, practicing, evaluating, and revising, before performing or displaying their products. Being able to work hard on a task is a valuable skill; however, some children are too anxious to create products that conform to external standards. They are so worried about making something "good" that they aren't able to fully enjoy the creative process. It is important to regularly assess the program's atmosphere to make sure it is not overly competitive and to help children relax and enjoy the creative process.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you keep a log for three days noting all the times you encourage children's creativity. Focus on the small things you do each day to help children solve problems, express their feelings, use materials in new ways, try new ideas, and explore their environment. Record examples for children ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12. Review the example that follows. Then use the blank form to record your words and actions.

Encouraging Children's Creativity
(Example)

Dates: *October 3–5*

What You Did	How This Encouraged Creativity
Max (11 years) tied a mobile to a hook in the ceiling. He stood back and asked me to look at the mobile too. He asked, "Do you think I should move the pebble to the other side so the mobile balances?" I agreed this would help and said, "Even if the mobile doesn't balance precisely, it is still very beautiful."	*Max was very proud of his mobile—he had worked on it for a long time. I let him know his creation did not have to be "perfect" to be of value.*
Oscar (6 years) and Tina (7 years) were having an argument. Tina wanted to be the doctor, but Oscar said he had never seen a doctor who was a lady, so there must not be any. Tina said her doctor is a lady. Oscar looked surprised and said maybe ladies could be doctors. He agreed to let Tina be the doctor today if he could be the doctor tomorrow. I said, "I liked the way you talked to each other about your disagreement. You found a way for both of you to have a chance to be the doctor."	*I let Oscar and Tina work out their disagreement by themselves and let them know they had done a good job solving their problem.*
Kent (9 years) put the hamster back in its cage and couldn't get the latch to close. He was getting frustrated. I said, "Kent, I've been having trouble getting the cage door to latch, too. Do you know what's wrong with the door? Maybe we could fix it together."	*I let Kent know it wasn't his fault the cage door wouldn't shut. I asked for his ideas on how to solve the problem and gave him a chance to help fix the door.*

Encouraging Children's Creativity*

Dates: ______________________

What You Did	How This Encouraged Creativity

Discuss this activity with your trainer and plan ways to continue encouraging children's creativity.

* Make additional copies of this form if you need more space.

Learning Activity II.

Motivating Children to Be Creative

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the elements of children's creativity; and
- provide an environment and interactions that motivate children to be creative.

Domain skills grow from an individual's talents, education, and experience.

Teresa Amabile, a social psychologist who has studied creativity, describes three characteristics of creative people: domain skills, creative thinking and working skills, and intrinsic motivation.[2] **Domain skills** are the talent, education, and experience an individual has in a specific area, for example, natural science, cooking, or creative writing. To some extent, we are born with talents; however, education and experience can help us develop them to the maximum. For example:

> Kinya loves to read and enjoys writing stories. Much of her writing mimics her favorite authors. After taking a creative writing course sponsored by the program, she learns to make up interesting characters, develop a plot, and write in her own style—one that reflects her unique experiences and personality.

Creative thinking and working skills allow children to concentrate on their projects.

Creative thinking and working skills allow children and adults to stick with a task until they have completed it to their own satisfaction. These skills are the positive work habits that enable children to concentrate on their projects for long periods of time, change course if their ideas are not working, accept and overcome temporary failures, and feel a great sense of pride in both their efforts and their accomplishments. For example:

> As Kinya further develops her writing abilities she spends many hours at the computer—writing, revising, revising again, and sometimes deleting an entire story because she doesn't think it is a high quality piece. When she does finish a story she is immensely pleased with herself and the result of her hard work.

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[2] Teresa Amabile, *Recognizing Children's Creativity* (NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989), p. 25.

Children with intrinsic motivation do things because they find them interesting, challenging, or satisfying.

Intrinsic motivation is the desire to do something just because it is interesting, challenging, or satisfying—not because it is required. Like talent, it is somewhat inborn; however, parents, teachers, and others who influence children can encourage the development of intrinsic motivation. For example:

> The school-age program Kinya attends provides materials, time, and support so she can master her creative writing skills and explore other topics of interest. In addition, she is allowed to choose what she wants to do, which reinforces her self-determination.

Children and adults are most creative in the areas where their domain skills, creative thinking and working skills, and intrinsic motivation overlap. For example:

> In addition to creative writing Kinya has other talents—strong science and math skills. She enjoys using these skills in school work and other projects; however, she is not as driven to use them as she is to write. She does not have the intrinsic motivation to be creative in these areas. Kinya is most creative when writing stories. She has domain skills (talent and experience as a writer), working skills (she keeps trying even when her writing isn't as "good" as she would like it to be), and intrinsic motivation (she loves writing because it makes her feel competent and successful). Although only 10 years old, Kinya has already discovered where her overlap lies.

A well-designed school-age program can motivate children to be creative.

A well-designed school-age program, stocked with open-ended materials and resources, and staffed with skilled individuals who engage in thoughtful, positive interactions with children can motivate children to be creative. Some examples of the characteristics of such a program and its staff follow:

- The daily schedule provides large blocks of time during which children can choose what they want to do and with whom they would like to be. They are free to pursue their own interests, be with their friends, and initiate their own games and activities.
- Most planned activities are voluntary. Children can choose to participate or not. They can decide when they are ready to move on to something else.
- There are a wide variety of materials, activities, and interest areas to meet the varied interests of children and to accommodate a wide age range.
- Children are exposed to the arts and aesthetic experiences. Examples of creative "products" are included in the

environment—music, paintings, scientific discoveries, inventions, photographs, recipes, dance, sculpture.

- The program invites art, music, dance, drama, and other specialists to offer classes on site for interested children or works with parents to make sure children have access to similar classes in the community.
- Staff serve as facilitators rather than directors. They create an environment, plan and introduce activities, provide opportunities for children to learn new skills, explain the rules in games, ask stimulating questions, and guide children's participation.
- Staff allow children to make messes and mistakes. They avoid telling children the "best" way to do things, instead, they let children make and carry out their own ideas and plans.
- Children's differences are valued. Staff help children appreciate their own uniqueness and that of others. They let children know each individual makes important contributions to the group.
- Staff identify sources of stress and change the program's schedule, environment, activities, and interactions to reduce stress and anxiety. They involve children in planning ways to make the program a pleasant and supportive place to spend time each day.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you review some characteristics of a school-age program and assess how your program's environment and human interactions motivate and support children's creativity. For each characteristic, provide an example of why your program does or does not match the given description. Next, share the assessment results with your colleagues and plan ways to improve the program's "creative climate."

Assessing the Program's Creative Climate

As you read the following characteristics of a school-age program, think about whether your program includes **similar** characteristics regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a mark in one of the columns on the right for each characteristic listed and give a brief explanation for your "rating." An example is provided for the first one.

Environment	**We Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. During a 60-minute free choice time block, children can choose what they want to do, and with whom. *We have two, 45-minute free choice periods. Children can select a new activity after the first period, continue the first one, or make up their own activities.*	☒	☐	☐
2. Every day there are simultaneous activities, indoors and outdoors, ranging from quiet to active.	☐	☐	☐
3. Snack is a relaxed time. Children choose what they want to eat, and when.	☐	☐	☐
4. The interest areas respond to children's skill levels and current "passions."	☐	☐	☐
5. The interest areas have a wide variety of open-ended materials children can use in many ways.	☐	☐	☐
6. The environment is rearranged when children want to perform a play or dance.	☐	☐	☐

	We Do This		
Environment	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
7. Works-in progress are stored on top of cabinets or in the craft area.	☐	☐	☐
8. There are several long-term projects underway. They are at different stages of completion.	☐	☐	☐
9. There is room to spread out and be messy. Cleaning supplies are stored at children's level.	☐	☐	☐
10. A display of children's arts and crafts or photographs greets visitors to the program.	☐	☐	☐
11. The music area has a wide variety of CDs and tapes—classical, jazz, popular, instruments, and materials for writing music.	☐	☐	☐
12. There are materials for all the visual arts.	☐	☐	☐

Human Interactions	We Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
13. Staff remind children it takes hard work and practice to develop their talents.	☐	☐	☐
14. Staff congratulate children who take risks and help them accept their mistakes as a natural part of life.	☐	☐	☐
15. Staff ask open-ended questions to help children think, develop solutions, or evaluate ideas and products.	☐	☐	☐
16. Staff participate in creative activities alongside children.	☐	☐	☐
17. Children are regularly involved in planning activities and sharing their ideas for improving the program.	☐	☐	☐
18. Both children and adults value each person's uniqueness—it's okay to do things in new ways.	☐	☐	☐
19. Staff spend most of their time as facilitators. They make it possible for children to be creative.	☐	☐	☐

Meet with your colleagues to share and discuss your assessment results. Use the space below to record any changes you would like to make.

Environment

Human Interactions

Discuss this activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity III.
Supporting Children's Long-Term Projects

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- encourage children's creativity by introducing and supporting long-term projects;
- help children maintain and expand their interests in ongoing projects; and
- provide different kinds and levels of support as children pass through the steps in the creative process.

Steps in the Creative Process

Whether initiated by children or staff, some projects are so engaging they go on for several weeks at a time. Such long-term projects provide many opportunities for children to exercise their creativity.

Graham Wallas, an early creativity theorist, defined the four steps in the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. As children become fully immersed in their projects they pass through these four steps. The process begins after a "problem" or challenge arises. The problem may be an assignment (explain the life cycle of a frog), or a personal decision to focus on solving a particular problem (how to keep the squirrels out of the bird feeders), or the decision to do or make something (make a hat). During the creative process children and adults may move back and forth between and among the steps rather than going from beginning to end. Understanding these steps can help you support children by providing space, time, and materials, and by offering suggestions and encouragement.

There are four steps in the creative process.

Each of the steps in the creative process[3] is described below with an example of how a group of children passed through the steps as they used a variety of objects to create a musical environment.

We use preparation or brainstorming to study and think about the task.

In the first step, **preparation or brainstorming**, we use our skills, knowledge, and understanding to experiment, explore, and play with ideas or objects. We study the problem, think, conduct research, seek information from others, and gather resources.

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[3] Based in part on the work of Graham Wallas (1926) and Teresa Amabile (1989).

Mr. Kelly, an amateur percussionist, brings to the program a sample of "found sounds" (objects that are not musical instruments but can be used to make interesting sounds). He displays the objects at a group meeting, demonstrates how to use them, and invites interested children to join him in the large-group area after the meeting to explore the found sounds.

Mr. Kelly encourages children to play with the objects and find out how to use them to make sounds. Jeremy suggests expanding the collection: everyone can bring objects from home or look for them in the program—indoors and outdoors. Mr. Kelly is pleased with Jeremy's suggestion. If Jeremy hadn't made it, he would have suggested it himself.

During the next week the children collect "found sounds" from home and go on a sound hunt at the program. Mr. Kelly puts a box in the large-group area so children can store their objects. Here are some examples of what they collect:

- garbage can lids;
- auto parts;
- bottles and cans (different sizes and shapes);
- spoons, ladles, and other household utensils;
- pots, pans, and lids;
- combs;
- sandpaper;
- rubber bands (different sizes);
- plastic and cardboard food containers (different sizes);
- pencils with rubber erasers; and
- dried gourds or seed pods.

During incubation, we generate many solutions and ideas.

In the second step, **incubation**, we make lists, draw sketches, or plan ways to combine ingredients and materials. Many different solutions and ideas are generated. We may even decide to put the task or problem aside for a while. During incubation our minds continue to work on the problem through both conscious and unconscious thinking.

When the box is more than full, Mr. Kelly gathers the children to discuss what they want to do next. Mary says the objects remind her of a one-man band she saw on television. Nat pipes in, "I've seen those too, and my dad has a record of jug band music. Jug bands use all sorts of objects to make music. Maybe we could do that too." The children are excited about the possibility of creating a band. Mr. Kelly listens to the suggestions, then repeats them for the children. He says, "You have a lot of good ideas. Perhaps you could think about them for a few days. Next week the talent show performers need to practice in this area. I know some of you are in the performance. Let's come back to this activity after the talent show is over." The children agree. They will think about what they want to do with their "found sounds" and meet again in a week or so.

During the next week the children participate in other activities; they also think about what to do next with their objects. Several children draw sketches of jug band instruments. Others continue to bring in objects.

We review and evaluate our ideas during illumination.

During the third step, **illumination**, we review our ideas, keep some, and reject others. Some ideas may just "pop" into our heads. A famous example of illumination is when Archimedes jumped out of his bathtub shouting "Eureka! I have it." When he saw the change in the height of the water after he entered the bathtub, he suddenly understood the theory of the displacement of water.

When they meet again, the children share and discuss their ideas. Britt says, "I think we have more stuff than we need for a band. Maybe we could create a whole orchestra." Jeremy suggests hanging some objects from the ceiling and placing others in designated places on the floor. He says they would be like large instruments in an orchestra—a piano or a kettle drum—that stay in one place. The others like his idea.

Mr. Kelly shows the children some new objects he brought from home—the back of an old dryer (it makes a great gong!) and a washtub. Britt wonders out loud, "What sound would the washtub make if we filled it with water?" Mr. Kelly gives her the go-ahead to try her idea. With the help of several children he checks the program's supplies for different lengths and thicknesses of aluminum and plastic tubing, metal and plastic-coated chains, and wooden doweling. They find some aluminum tubing that makes a beautiful chime-like sound when they let it swing freely. Nat puts some tubing on a piece of foam padding, "It will absorb the loud sound and make it soft and tinkly," he says.

In the verification stage, we evaluate our ideas and products and make changes if necessary.

In the fourth stage, **verification or communication**, we consider whether our creative ideas or products are useful, complete, or correct. We might seek the opinion of others. We change and fine tune our creations.

In the verification stage, we may decide to: stop working because the task is finished successfully; try again because the outcome is not successful; or set aside the task because the approach is just not working. When the outcome is successful, we often want to share the idea or product with others.

> After working for a week to create their musical environment the children tell Mr. Kelly they are ready to "use it." He suggests having two children experiment with making sounds while the others watch, listen, and make suggestions. This will be less disturbing to others, and it will be easier to hear the unique sounds made by each object. Two children are picked to be the first "musicians," while the others make suggestions. After a while they reverse roles until everyone has a chance to "play" the environment. The musicians use the following techniques:
>
> - Shaking, striking, blowing on, and plucking objects.
> - Playing the objects in different ways—rapidly, slowly, softly, loudly, strongly, and gently—as if they were musical instruments.
> - Using the sounds in different combinations to create musical texture.
> - Using selected sounds to "talk" to each other (as jazz musicians might do).
> - Playing objects like an orchestra—they choose one or two "instruments" to play; another child conducts—directing when to play and when to be silent, how loudly or softly, and how rapidly or slowly.
> - Using the sounds to create a special mood or feeling, and asking others to guess what mood they are trying to express.
>
> Experimenting with ways to "play" the environment continues for another week. Britt, who is in the school band, suggests creating a musical performance for the whole program. Preparing for the concert goes on for another week.
>
> Jeremy suggests taping the concert so Mr. Kelly helps him set up the tape player. They play the tape at pick-up time so parents can hear it.

> Britt borrows the tape to take to school She asks her band teacher to help her compare the sounds made by the objects in the musical environment with sounds made by instruments. The children decide to use the found objects to create sounds to match those made by playing instruments.

Supporting Children's Long-Term Projects

Before introducing the project described above, Mr. Kelly developed a general plan. To fully support children's creativity; however, he remained flexible and responded to their ideas and interests. He recognized and understood the steps in the creative process so he was able to provide an environment and interactions that supported children's creativity and helped them get fully involved in their long-term project.

Try these suggestions.

Some examples of ways school-age staff can support children's long-term projects follow:

- Help children understand there is no hurry for them to complete their projects. Unlike school, where deadlines may be necessary, the school-age program does not ask children to complete their work according to a precise schedule. Help them value the process of creating. Work begun today can continue tomorrow, and longer if appropriate.
- Participate with children from time to time so you are available to encourage and offer assistance when asked. Children won't have to leave their work to ask your opinion or to share their ideas.
- Encourage children to take time to think about what they want to do and to develop plans. Suggest trying unique and different techniques. Listen to their ideas and ask questions to encourage them to think of a variety of options: "How do you want the audience to feel about your character?"
- Allow works-in-progress to stay in place until the creators are ready to work on them again. Provide paper files or floppy disks for unfinished plays and stories; cardboard boxes to store a child's unfinished project and the materials he or she plans to use; space for ongoing experiments.
- Let children know you are available to help them critically evaluate their ideas and products. At the same time, remind them that taking risks, experiencing success and failure, and learning from mistakes are all part of the creative process.

- Provide space and opportunities for interested children to share the results of their creative work. Offer bulletin boards, the opportunity to make a proposal during group meeting, time in the schedule to perform a play or piece of music, and a column or featured story in the weekly newsletter.
- Praise children for their hard work and perseverance. Let them know you value their willingness to take chances, try new ideas, and accept challenges.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you keep a journal noting the different ways you support children as they carry out a long-term project. The project might be one you introduce or one suggested by the children. Once you get started on this activity, it may take several weeks to complete. This will depend on the level and length of the children's interest and involvement. You can start the activity when the children's project begins and make journal entries as you provide support. At the same time, continue with the other learning activities in this module. By the time you complete them, you should have enough journal recordings about the children's project. Begin by reviewing the example that follows.

Supporting Children's Long-Term Projects

(Example)

Children/Ages: *Annika, Mauricio, Thomas, Caroline, Wendy, Inez (10 to 11 years)*

Dates: *April 10-23* **Setting:** *Outdoors*

Activity: *Building a clubhouse*

Briefly describe how and why the activity began:

These children are fifth-graders. Their parents want them to attend the program next year. I heard Annika tell Thomas she is too old for the program. He agreed and complained there are too many little kids and the big kids have no privacy. We live in a warm climate, so we use the outdoors almost all year round. I asked Annika and Thomas if they would like to build an outdoor clubhouse for the older children to use this year and next. They said yes, and gathered the others at a planning session.

Journal Entries

Date: *April 10*

I sat in on the planning session and made a few suggestions: decide where to build, get permission, make a list of supplies and tools needed. Then I left the children to conduct their own meeting.

Annika and Thomas gave me a list of supplies and tools they will need. They said they would like to build a two-story clubhouse in the oak tree. I said I would ask the director if this would be okay. I explained it might take a few days to get an answer.

Date: *April 14*

I gathered the group to let them know the director's response. She said they could build the clubhouse in the oak tree, however, they would need to make sure it is safe. Inez said her dad helped her uncle build a beach house, so she would ask him to help them design a safe clubhouse. At the end of the day I reminded her to ask her dad. He was excited about helping.

Date: *April 23*

Inez's dad gave us a list of supplies needed after meeting with the children and drawing up plans. To raise money to buy the supplies, the children decided to have a bake sale. (It will probably take several bake sales, but they are very excited).

Supporting Children's Long-Term Projects

Children/Ages: ______________________________

Dates: ____________________ **Setting:** ____________________

Activity: ______________________________

Briefly describe how and why the activity began:

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Journal Entries (Record your entries below or in a notebook if you prefer.)

Date: ____________________

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Date: ____________________

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Journal Entries (continued)*

Date: ____________________

Date: ____________________

Date: ____________________

Date: ____________________

Review your journal entries, then discuss the children's project and how you provided support with your trainer.

* Make additional copies of this form if needed.

Learning Activity IV.

Planning and Conducting Activities That Encourage Creativity

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- plan activities designed to encourage children's participation and creativity; and
- encourage children to fully explore and try out their ideas.

School-age programs typically offer children a wide variety of activity choices. Children can play group games, care for pets, listen to music, make a collage, or just explore the materials in a favorite interest area. In addition, staff may plan and carry out special activities that respond to children's interests, allow them to develop or use specific skills, and/or encourage their creativity.

School-age staff are facilitators—they encourage, question, guide, and assist children.

When planning and leading creative activities, your role is that of a facilitator. This role does not involve judging or telling children exactly what to do. Instead, you encourage, question, guide, and assist children as they explore materials or try new ways to express themselves. Creative activities can include making paper maché vegetables, baking bread, playing dramatic games, taking photographs, writing and illustrating haiku, or developing hypotheses and conducting experiments. Even outdoor games and sports can be creative activities. Children can make up new rules for a game, turn hopscotch squares into circles, rearrange an obstacle course to make it more challenging, or find out what happens when the tail on a kite is longer or shorter.

Some creative activities involve specific techniques or processes, for example, baking bread. These activities are considered "creative" because they offer opportunities for children to explore the properties of materials, invent variations on basic techniques, or alter the ingredients or steps in a recipe. For example, after learning the basics of bread baking, children might decide to add juice instead of water, let the bread rise for a longer time, or sculpt the bread dough into interesting shapes.

Planning creative activities begins by finding out about children's interests.

Planning creative activities is no different than planning in general. It begins by finding out what children would like to do. You can collect this information through surveys, by listening to conversations, and by conducting regular observations. Sometimes, children will ask you to help them plan and carry out a specific activity. Sometimes, you will plan activities you think children will find fun or interesting, or that will help children learn a specific skill.

Before offering an activity, it is a good idea to try it yourself. For example, before introducing children to tie-dying, you might want to create your own T-shirt. You could experiment with different knots and colors and wear your finished shirt the day before the activity to inspire interest.

Try these suggestions for planning activities.

Steps to take when planning creative activities follow.

- **Set some goals** for the activity. What do you hope children will learn? What opportunities for creative expression will you offer?
- **Collect the materials and equipment** you will need. Some may be on hand at the program (dyes), some might come from the children (white T-shirts), some could be gathered from home or the program office (string or rubber bands), and some may need to be retrieved from a storage closet (plastic or aluminum tubs).
- **Review the instructions**—usually included in activity books, magazines, or your own "idea" file. Ask several children to help you make numbered "recipe cards" to illustrate how to do the activity. Use a different card for each step and draw pictures so children with beginning reading skills can follow along. Cover these with clear Contact paper so they can be saved and reused.
- **Anticipate the kinds of questions** children might ask. Also, think of questions you can ask to encourage children's creative thinking, risk taking, and experimentation.
- **Make the activity open-ended**. For example, in the tie-dying activity, children will learn the techniques used to tie knots that create specific patterns. However, children will also make their own creative choices. They can choose where to place the knots, what size to make them, what colors to use, what fabric or article of clothing to dye. Thus, there are many open-ended aspects of the activity.
- **"Advertise" the activity**. Describe it during a group meeting, set up an example to encourage children's curiosity, ask for volunteers to help gather materials or set up the activity.

- **Adapt the activity** to address the needs and interests of children you expect will participate. For example, how can you structure the activity so Denise, a highly distractible child, will enjoy herself? You might help Denise break the activity into smaller tasks—reviewing design patterns, making the knots, dying the T-shirt. Or, what can you do to help Carl carry out the interesting ideas for new colors he is likely to have? You might provide some small basins so Carl and other interested children could experiment with mixing new colors.

Try these suggestions for setting up activities.

Some strategies for setting up creative activities follow.

- **Set up the activity near the resources** children will use. Exactly how you set up will depend on the activity. For example, for arts and crafts activities such as tie-dying, place the materials where children can easily see and reach them and where it is all right to make a "mess." To set up for drama or music activities you might only need to clear an open area, put a tape in the boom box, and get out the props.
- **Prepare in advance**, or with children's help. If children are involved in setting up, use this time to explain what you will be doing during the activity.
- **Organize the activity so children can complete one step at a time.** For example, children can explore designs at one end of the table; tie knots at the other end; dye T-shirts in tubs full of dye on the counter next to the sink; and hang shirts to dry on the drying rack (place newspapers or a piece of plastic underneath to catch the drips).

Try these suggestions for conducting the activities.

Here are some ideas for conducting creative activities.

- **Gather the children** who are interested in the activity. If space is limited, explain you will offer the activity again—later in the day or on another day. Ask for volunteers to wait until later to participate. Children will not be able to fully explore their ideas if they are cramped and have to worry about getting into each other's space.
- **Give a brief overview of the steps** involved in the activity; then go back to the first step and explain it in detail. Children will be eager to get started so they will not want to hear lengthy explanations of the whole activity. As children finish each step, you can give instructions on what each child needs to do next.
- **Allow plenty of time** for children to make their own plans and explore the materials and equipment. Encourage them to fully enjoy this part of the creative process. Children are often so eager to make a finished product they miss out on the pleasure that comes from considering many different ways to carry out their ideas.

- **Observe children's involvement**. Look for cues to see if children find the activity interesting and if it matches their skills. For example, can the children follow the directions? Do they seem actively involved? Do they need a lot of help from you?
- **Allow children to participate in activities in their own way.** For example, Lance might prefer to use one color rather than several for his tie-dye shirt. Perhaps he is more interested in experimenting with the knots than with colors.
- **Talk to children** about what they are doing. Ask questions to stimulate their creativity. "What would happen if you tied your knots with string instead of rubber bands?" "If the purple dye is too dark, how can you make it more violet?" Draw attention to a child's creative approach. "Tony, tell us how you made the patterns on the shoulders of your T-shirt. They look like fringe."
- **Give plenty of notice** before clean-up time so children can finish what they are doing or reach an appropriate stopping point. Some activities are completed in a day, others carry over to the next or last even longer.
- **Leave the materials in place** so children can use them on their own, without adult direction. This will allow children to continue exploring the materials and using their creativity.

It is important to remain flexible and open to change.

One final point to remember when planning and leading "creative" activities is to remain flexible and open to changing your plans. Children may think of different ways to use craft materials, move to music, or carry out an experiment. This is not only "okay," it is to be encouraged. Some children are always eager to apply their own creativity to a situation and others may catch their enthusiasm. For these children, the planned activity serves as a stimulus, suggesting many more options than you had envisioned. If the result of your planned activity is to spark creativity, then it is a success.

Try these suggestions.

Some suggestions for activities that can promote creativity follow:

Make up a new ending. Read a story out loud; stop at an exciting moment. Children can work alone, in pairs, or in small groups to make up their own ending to the story. Children can read or perform the new endings, then read the author's.

Paper bag plays. Place a variety of props in several large paper bags. Each bag should have at least as many props as there are children in a group. Give each group a bag. Ask the children to make up a play using the props. Have children perform their plays the same day. The "actors" tend to lose their spontaneity if they have to wait until the next day to perform.

Make African thumb pianos. Have children place different lengths of tongue depressors between a piece of wood and the edge of a table. The weight of the wood will keep the tongue depressors in place. Shorter segments will make higher sounds when stroked with the thumb; longer segments will produce lower sounds. Children can experiment with different lengths to tune the instrument to play different songs.

Tell me about yourself. Put out a box of photographs of people—old family photos from a second-hand shop, photos from magazines, photos taken by staff or children. Ask children to work in pairs. Each pair selects a photo; one child pretends to be the person in the photo while the other acts as an interviewer. The pairs can write or tape record the "autobiography." "I was born in Topeka in 1945. My parents ran a small grocery store. I had six brothers, four sisters and…"

Count to a million (or as close as you can get). Ask pairs or small groups to think of something—indoors or outdoors—which is made up of a million different parts. For example, children might estimate there are a million grains of sand in the sandbox, a million blades of grass, a million leaves on a tree, or a million floor tiles. Next, ask children to prove their estimate is reasonable. For example, to prove there are a million blades of grass on the field, they might measure the area of the whole field, count the blades of grass in a one square foot area, and use these two measurements to estimate how many blades of grass are on the field.

Plaster masks. Gather headbands or barrettes, petroleum jelly, Plaster of Paris strips (cut into pieces two to three inches long), and a shallow container of water. Explain the procedure and ask for a volunteer to be a "model." Have the volunteer fasten his or her hair away from the forehead using head bands or barrettes, then cover his or her face with petroleum jelly. Place the plaster strips in water; run two fingers between them to remove excess water. Gently place a strip on the child's face, then make it smooth. Continue placing wet strips on the face, overlapping so no skin shows. Leave holes for the eyes and mouth. Allow the mask to dry for about 20 minutes. (Play soft music to relax the volunteer.) Carefully lift the mask off the child's face and put it in a safe place to dry overnight. After the demonstration, children work in pairs to create their own masks. The next day they can paint and decorate them.

Mirror images. Have each child work face to face with a partner as if looking into a mirror. One child acts as the leader, moving arms, legs, fingers, or head in slow motion. The partner imitates the motions as if he or she was the leader's mirror image. Children can switch partners or do mirror images to music. Older children can choreograph mirror images and perform them for others.

Let me tell you about life on earth. Ask children to use whatever creative medium they prefer to tell a visitor from another planet what daily life is like on earth. Cultural practices they might want to explain include: transportation, sleeping habits, clothes, food (home-cooked and restaurants), toys and games, houses and other buildings, sports, leisure activities, and any others the children think of. Creative media might include drawing, painting, making a video, storytelling, creating a photo mural (using original photos or pictures cut from magazines), songwriting, or any others the children think of.

Make up new rules for a familiar game. When children seem bored with games and sports, involve them in making up new rules and new ways to play. For example, they might play a variation of baseball by using different equipment—street hockey sticks (instead of bats) and small rubber balls (instead of softballs). Players could run around the bases and score runs, as in baseball; however, children might want to change the rules in other ways to make the game new and different.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity, you plan and conduct an activity that provides opportunities for children to use their creativity. Begin by thinking about what the children might enjoy. Your cues will come from reviewing the ideas in this learning activity, reading your observation notes, listening to children's conversations, talking to other staff, and consulting activity books. Develop a plan, set up, and conduct the activity. Think about what happened as you answer the questions that follow. Begin by reviewing the example.

Planning and Conducting Activities That Encourage Creativity

(Example)

Children/Ages: *Teresa, Justin, Hannah, Monica, Ricardo (5 to 7 years); Dina, Rita (11 years)*

Date: *November 11* **Setting:** *Large-group activity area*

Activity: *Creative music and movement, using props and instruments, listening to music*

Planning and Setting Up

Why do you want to offer this activity?

I've seen several younger children watching the older ones listening to music and teaching each other new dance steps. They seem to want to join in, but most of the older children tell them to go away because they want to spend time alone. I think the younger ones would enjoy dancing and moving in their own way.

Which children do you think will participate?

Teresa, Justin, Hannah, and Ricardo are likely participants. Once we get started some of the older children—Dina and Rita might join us. They tend to enjoy leading the younger children in activities.

How could children use their creativity?

They could make up their own movements, take turns making music, select and use props such as scarves and streamers to enhance their movements, and "choreograph" a dance.

What materials and equipment are needed?

Props: streamers, lightweight fabric, sheets, scarves, feathers, balloons, capes, ribbons, hula hoops.

Rhythm instruments: drums, xylophones, bells, clackers, maracas, cymbals, tambourines, wood blocks.

Tape player and assortment of tapes.

How will you "advertise" the activity? Where and how will you set up?

I will mention it to the children I think might be interested and announce it at group meeting. Then I will spread out the materials in the large-group area for children to explore. While they are exploring I will describe what we can do with the props and instruments.

Conducting the Activity

How did you begin the activity?

When several children had gathered to explore the materials I put in a tape—Ravel's Bolero. I asked the children if they would like to use the props and instruments to move and play along with the music. I demonstrated with a scarf and a maraca.

What did the children do?

Hannah and Monica picked up a scarf and each held an end while they swayed to the music. Soon they began moving as they swayed.

Ricardo asked for my maraca and picked up the other one so he had a pair. He stood in place and shook the maracas while moving his body from one side to the other.

Justin jumped in and out of the hula hoop. He didn't seem to pay attention to the music.

The children continued using the props and instruments for about ten minutes. Then Dina and Rita joined them and began making suggestions of how to use the materials in different ways. Dina asked if there were other tapes, looked through them, then selected another one—Rock and Roll Oldies.

Teresa asked Justin to dance with her. He said no, so she danced with Rita. Justin stood and watched for a while, then danced alone.

What did you do and say to encourage children's creativity?

I offered Justin the drum and asked if he might like to listen for the beat in the music, then play along.

I suggested changing the tape when the children seemed to be tiring of it.

I suggested to Hannah and Monica they could each hold a side of the hula hoop, dance with it, and perhaps take turns stepping in and out of it.

When children seemed ready to do something different, I suggested making up a dance together.

After the Activity

How did the children continue enjoying this activity on their own?

Dina and Rita continued their leadership and led the others in making up a dance.

All the children continued using and exploring the props and instruments.

Justin continued to be more interested in playing the instruments than moving with the props. He explored each instrument and asked if he could make some new ones.

How did you provide support?

I helped Dina and Rita plan a simple dance the younger children could learn.

I asked the children if they needed more props and instruments for their dance.

I showed Justin a book on making musical instruments and told him to pick some to make and to let me know what materials were needed. When Daniel also showed interest in making instruments, I suggested he and Justin work together.

Planning and Conducting Activities That Encourage Creativity

Children/Ages:

Date: **Setting:**

Activity:

Planning and Setting Up

Why do you want to offer this activity?

Which children do you think will participate?

How could children use their creativity?

What materials and equipment are needed?

How will you "advertise" the activity? Where and how will you set up?

Conducting the Activity

How did you begin the activity?

What did the children do?

What did you do and say to encourage children's creativity?

After the Activity

How did the children continue enjoying this activity on their own?

How did you provide support?

Discuss the activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity V.

Filling the Environment with Open-Ended Materials That Promote Creativity

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- select open-ended materials that promote creativity; and
- ensure all interest areas contain items children can use in creative work.

Open-ended materials can be used in many different ways.

One of the easiest ways to promote children's creativity is to fill the environment with open-ended materials—items children can use in a variety of ways. They are ideal for school-age programs because they are interesting to children of different ages and stages of development and trigger their imaginations. For example, given a box of recycled materials children might do the following:

- make collages;
- sort and classify the items;
- make mobiles;
- decorate masks;
- use them in experiments;
- use them for inventions; and
- use them as props for skits and plays.

Children get involved in many kinds of creative work at the school-age program, therefore, it is important to include open-ended materials that invite discovery in all interest areas. Here are some examples of children engaged in creative work in different areas.

> Eduardo uses the T-square and ruler in the math area to draw a layout of his room at home. He plans to design a built-in platform bed, loft, and desk.
>
> Wanda is in the large group area. She ties several streamers across a hula hoop, then weaves more streamers across the hoop until it is filled with color. She uses the hoop as she choreographs a dance.
>
> Rhonda and Janine are in the science area taking apart a broken remote control unit to see how it is made. They

want to rewire it so it can be used to control the program's tape player.

Brianna and Abdullah are in the board and table games area using Legos to build a multi-level space station.

J. J. is working on the computer in the quiet area. He is rewriting the dialogue for one of the characters in his play.

Carley, Nikki, and Shoshana are outdoors jumping rope. Nikki makes up a jump rope rhyme and teaches it to the others.

Module 3, Program Environment, includes a checklist for indoor interest areas and for the outdoor area. Refer to these checklists for more examples of open-ended materials.

Coloring books, dittos, and craft kits do not encourage creativity.[4]

Many school-age staff wonder if it is a good idea to offer coloring books, dittos, or craft kits as part of their creative activities. The answer is simple. No, it is not a good idea.

For one thing, it is difficult for some younger children to stay in the lines of a ditto or coloring book figure. This sets up children for failure. Materials such as craft kits may help children learn to read and follow directions and develop specific skills; however, children are more likely to use their imaginations, experiment, and express their individuality when they plan and carry out their own projects using a variety of open-ended materials.

What should you do if parents want their children to use these materials, as they do in school? Explain that teachers may want to reinforce the concepts and information covered in their lessons. For example, they might provide dittos so children can practice doing arithmetic problems. When teachers want to encourage creativity, they offer open-ended materials and activities similar to those at the school-age program.

Most parents who look forward to seeing colored dittos and professional-looking art are really looking for signs that their children are doing well at the program. What they want to see is evidence of their child's progress. Completed craft projects that look just like everyone else's seem to be proof that their child is accomplishing something at the program.

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[4] Adapted with permission from Diane Trister Dodge and Laura J. Colker, *The Creative Curriculum® for Family Child Care* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, 1991), p. 139.

By sharing your approach to encouraging creativity with the children's parents, you can offer them the reassurances they need. You can help them understand that, even without dittos, coloring books, and craft kits, their children are doing important things during their time at the program. It doesn't take long to convince parents that making a slightly crooked box in the woodworking center provides a more valuable experience than making a construction from a kit.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on promoting children's creativity in all interest areas and outdoors. The chart that follows lists typical interest areas in school-age programs. For each one, list three open-ended materials found in your program and how these encourage children to use their creativity. Two examples are provided for each area to get you started.

Filling the Environment With Open-Ended Materials

Quiet Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Puppets, flannel board, props	*Children can use for storytelling*
Book-binding supplies such as a paper punch, thick yarn and needles, cardboard, glue, stapler	*Children can publish their stories and poems*

House Corner/Dramatic Play Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Paper and writing materials	*Children can write skits and plays*
Dress-up clothes (male and female)	*Children can explore different roles and perform skits and plays*

Art and Crafts Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Painting "tools" such as paint rollers, sponges, cotton swabs, eye droppers, string, and twigs	*Children can explore painting techniques*
Scissors that children who are right- or left-handed can use	*Children can cut paper and other materials to the sizes they want to use in projects*

Sand and Water Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Many different kinds of props	*Children can use props to pour, spray, measure, squeeze, sift, and mold*
Waterproof aprons or smocks and clean-up supplies (sponges, mops, brooms)	*Children know it's okay to make a mess and that they can clean up after themselves*

Science and Nature Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Posters and charts showing how children use the scientific method to conduct experiments	*Children can learn from and be inspired by each other's explorations*
Oil, colorings, powders, gelatin, soap suds	*Children can use in experiments with water*

Woodworking Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Assorted objects—bottle caps, wheels, fishing line, rubber bands, tongue depressors, pie pans, sandpaper	*Children can use to make simple instruments*
Soft wood (pine and balsa) and carving tools	*Children can make wood carvings*

Music Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Tape player and blank tapes	*Children can record their own music and songs*
Scarves, streamers, and props	*Children can use in spontaneous or choreographed dances*

Blocks and Construction Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Crates, cardboard boxes, or appliance cartons	*Children can make hideaways or clubhouses*
Complete set of wooden unit blocks	*Children can plan and build roads and structures*

Board and Table Games Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Cardboard, markers, scissors and tape	*Children can make up board games and puzzles*
Games such as Scrabble and chess	*Children can think creatively to consider ways to make words and the impact of their moves*

Math Area

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Graph paper, pencils, rulers, and calculators	*Children can design buildings or create room layouts*
Parquetry blocks	*Children can make designs*

Outdoors

Material	How It Encourages Creativity
Colored chalk	*Children can create sidewalk art and design new ways to play hopscotch*
Balls and rackets	*Children can invent new games*

Are there materials in all the interest areas and outdoors to encourage children's creativity? If not, what can your program do to provide additional stimulating materials? Discuss this activity with your colleagues and your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for promoting children's creativity. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Summarize what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Promoting Children's Creativity

Providing a Rich and Varied Environment That Invites Exploration and Experimentation

1. **How did Ms. Andrews involve the children in creating a rich and varied environment?**
   a. She responded to the children's interest in how birds weave their nests.
   b. She supported the children's interest in weaving by providing space in the art area for meetings and storage of materials.
   c. She suggested they set aside a shelf to keep "works in progress" out of the way of the younger children who use the room during the day.

2. **How do open-ended materials promote creativity?**
   a. There is no right or wrong way to use the materials.
   b. They invite children to explore and experiment without any rules about what to do.
   c. They allow children to use their imaginations and to make choices and decisions about how to use the materials.

Offering a Variety of Activities and Experiences That Promote Self-Expression

1. **Why did Ms. Ramos plan this activity?**
   a. She overheard Alex and Brianna discussing whether there could be life on other planets.
   b. She remembered she enjoyed a similar activity when she was their age.
   c. An activity such as this one could build on the children's school experiences.

2. What did Ms. Ramos do to encourage the children's creativity?

a. She raised children's awareness by talking about conditions on other planets.

b. She provided books about the planets so children could explore them and ask questions.

c. She provided materials for making the "beings."

d. She asked thought-provoking questions while children were making their beings.

e. She showed the children where they could store their unfinished projects.

Interacting With Children in Ways That Encourage and Respect Original Thoughts, Ideas, and Expression

1. How did Mr. Ryan interact with the children to encourage creative thinking?

a. He approached the girls to ask them to tell him more about their concerns.

b. He listened to the girls before making any comments.

c. He asked for their ideas for making up a new kind of dodge ball.

d. He complimented them on their idea.

2. How did Mr. Ryan demonstrate respect for the children's ideas?

a. He let the girls know that their concerns were important to him.

b. He asked for their ideas for a new kind of dodge ball.

c. He encouraged them to share their ideas with the other children.

GLOSSARY

Creativity	The ability to develop something new—an idea or product—that is substantially different from anything the person has seen or heard before and is correct, useful toward achieving a goal, appealing, or meaningful to the person in some way.
Creative process	The four steps an individual moves through while creating an idea or product.
Creative thinking and working skills	Positive work habits that allow an individual to concentrate and complete a task.
Domain skills	Talent, education, and experience in a given area.
Illumination	The third step in the creative process during which people review their ideas, keep some, and reject others. Ideas may "pop" into their heads.
Incubation	The second step in the creative process during which people generate many different solutions and ideas.
Intrinsic motivation	The desire to do something because it is interesting, challenging, or satisfying.
Open-ended materials	Materials that can be used in many different ways.
Open-ended question	A question that can be answered in a number of ways.
Preparation	Also known as brainstorming, this is the first step in the creative process. People use their skills, knowledge, and understanding to experiment, explore, and play with ideas or objects.
Problem solving	The process of thinking through a problem and coming up with one or several possible solutions.
Self-esteem	A sense of worth; a good feeling about oneself and one's abilities. Someone with strong self-esteem feels respected, valued, and able to do things successfully and independently.
Verification	Also known as communication, this is the fourth step in the creative process. People evaluate their creative ideas or products, share them with others, and fine tune them.

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SELF

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OVERVIEW

FOSTERING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM INVOLVES:

- developing a positive and supportive relationship with each child;
- helping children accept and appreciate themselves and others; and
- providing children with opportunities to be successful and feel competent.

Self-esteem evolves from a sense of self.

This module is about two interrelated topics—how children gain a sense of self and how this self-knowledge can lead to self-esteem. A sense of self is an awareness of your identity: who you are. Your identity is made up of many variables: physical characteristics, likes and dislikes, strengths, interests, language, the foods you do or don't eat, experiences in your family, at school, and in the community, your expectations and values, what is expected of you, and whether you feel valued by others. Our identity and sense of self develops and changes throughout our lives. Our physical appearance changes, we develop new skills and interests, we experience and learn from our successes and failures, and we establish relationships with new people.

Self-esteem grows out of a sense of identity. Some people have negative feelings about themselves. They might dislike the way they look, feel they have nothing in common with other family members, reject their ethnicity and culture, or think they are not capable of succeeding. Other people are comfortable with their sense of self. They may still want to improve some aspect of their lives, for example, by beginning an exercise program or being more attentive to their families, but, overall they accept who they are and feel valued by others.

Self-esteem develops when you feel valued and experience success.

Your self-esteem develops when others accept you and you have successful experiences. People with self-esteem have the confidence to tackle problems, attempt new challenges, offer support to others, recover from setbacks, and learn from their mistakes. They have personal standards for their own behavior that are based on the values held by their families, culture, society, and other groups to which they belong.

There has been much discussion among teachers, administrators, school-age staff, and others who work with children concerning the importance of self-esteem and what adults can do to foster children's positive feelings about themselves. Some popular practices designed to promote self-esteem may lead instead to over-indulgent self-love that is based solely on trivial things. For example, when children are asked to draw a picture of something that makes them special, they may focus on relatively insignificant personal characteristics such as their long hair or new shoes. As a result, they may begin to believe that superficial traits are what make them special. The strategies recommended in this module provide opportunities for children to experience the deep satisfaction that comes from accepting oneself, mastering a difficult skill, helping a family member, and contributing to the success of a group project. Children's self-esteem grows when they learn to accept and appreciate other people, as well as themselves.

During the school-age years, children seek challenges and thrive on real work. Their sense of self grows as they learn what they can do and receive praise for meaningful efforts and accomplishments.[1] They become more aware of how their family and cultural lifestyles, economic levels, expectations, and values are alike and different from those of other families and cultures. Working and playing with peers, understanding the need for rules and limits, and contributing to the community help children see themselves in relation to others. This is an essential component of gaining a sense of self and developing self-esteem.

School-age staff can help children develop a positive sense of self.

School-age staff play an important role in helping children develop a sense of identify and self-esteem. By demonstrating respect—for each child as an individual, for the needs of the group, and for yourself and your colleagues—you convey the message that each person is valued.

When adults who interact with children are proud of who they are and what they can do, children have a model for self-esteem. If they support children's efforts and provide constructive feedback, children are likely to be willing to take risks and not give up when they encounter difficulties.

That's why you are such an important person to the children in your program. In the course of daily life at the program—as you help a child carry out an experiment, listen and respond to how they are feeling, involve children in planning activities, or encourage a child to solve a problem—you are giving them realistic opportunities for success. Each day the children in your program learn about themselves—their strengths, interests, skills, views about the world around them, and how they are viewed and accepted by others. Through your relationships with these children, you can help them learn to value themselves and others.

[1] Based on Willam Damon, *Greater Expectations* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995).

Your support and encouragement help children develop confidence in their own abilities which will motivate them to continue learning throughout their lives.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in fostering children's sense of self.

Developing a Positive and Supportive Relationship with Each Child

Observe children to identify what makes them unique—personality, learning styles, temperament, skills, talents, interests, and needs—and let them know you value their individuality. "Each of you has a different writing style. Roxanne, you think and organize what you're going to write before you sit at the computer. Jeremy, you think and write at the same time."

Show children you enjoy being with them. "Carlos, you tell such funny stories. I look forward to Mondays when I can hear about your latest weekend escapade."

Listen to children as they express their feelings and take their concerns seriously. "When Dana came back from kindergarten today, she told me she's worried about growing up because her clothes won't fit her. I reminded her she gets new clothes as she outgrows the old ones. She may have mixed feelings about becoming more independent."

Learn and use words in the home language of children whose first language is not English. "Silvia, ¿puedes ayudárme buscar estós libros por favor?" (Can you help me look for those books?)

Know what each child is able to do and show you value each child's unique skills and characteristics. "James, the gerbil ran behind the shelves. You're good at getting him back in his cage. Could you help us?"

Identify children's interests through observation, surveys, and conversations; use this information to plan activities and provide materials. "Lori told me she wants to learn how to do origami. I can get a book from the library and help her follow the instructions."

Work with parents and colleagues to make sure each child receives the individual attention he or she needs. "Mr. Trent, Gerald just slammed the dictionary down on the table. I think he needs some help learning to use it. Can you please help him while I finish up this club meeting?"

Show children you have a positive relationship with their parents and that their family's involvement is valued and appreciated.

"Ms. Cane, I was pleased to get your recipe for flat bread. The children had a great time making it. If you have other recipes that we could use, we'd appreciate it if you would send them with Kyra."

Offer gentle physical or nonverbal contact—a hug, a touch, a smile—to show you care.

Helping Children Accept and Appreciate Themselves and Others

Provide a wide variety of activities and materials that do not limit children's options because of individual differences. Avoid making biased remarks concerning gender, disabilities, culture, ethnic background, or any other differences. "Danielle and Bradley make a good team. She's a great pitcher and he's a great catcher."

Offer sports and games that help children learn to value fairness, cooperation, and personal growth. "When we form teams for softball and soccer, we try to make them balanced so one team doesn't have an unfair advantage over the other."

Acknowledge children's efforts and accomplishments. "Leila, I enjoyed the play you wrote for the Drama Club. The characters seem so real."

Reinforce children's behavior when they cooperate with others, help someone achieve a goal, or show that they value each other's accomplishments. "Sofia, you spent a lot of time coaching Krystina so she could learn to do a handstand with straight legs. I noticed you clapping louder than anyone else when Krystina performed in the gymnastics show."

Make sure the program's environment and activities reflect the cultures of all children who attend and help children learn about and appreciate a wide variety of cultures and ethnic groups. "Teresa, you're right, Mardi Gras masks are very similar to the masks people from other countries wear in their celebrations."

Encourage children to take pride when they solve a difficult problem, learn something new, or improve their own performance. "Petra, it wasn't easy to learn how to play checkers. You must feel proud of yourself for sticking with it."

Providing Children with Opportunities to Be Successful and Feel Competent

Provide opportunities for children to develop leadership skills. "Rion wants to start a Skating Club. Anyone who is interested can come to the first meeting on Tuesday afternoon."

Help children deal with setbacks by accepting their feelings about failures and responding respectfully. "I know you were disappointed when your mug blew up in the kiln. You were experimenting with a new way to attach the handle. Now you know it has to be attached more securely."

Plan activities and select materials that can be enjoyed by children with different abilities and skill levels. "Charmaine and Renée have sketched the outline for the outer space mural. Now they need someone to paint planets, stars, and spaceships and someone to paint the sky in the background."

Allow children to choose what they want to do and to choose not to participate in an activity. "Alex and Kyle prefer to work on their invention today rather than play soccer with the group."

Help children gain the skills they need to overcome fear of failure. "Whenever I had to prepare for an oral report in school, it helped to put my key points on note cards. There are some cards on the shelf in the quiet area."

Provide children with the time and resources they need to pursue their interests or master a skill. "Drew, one of the parents donated an old tape deck. You and Tinh might want to take it apart."

Encourage children to solve their own problems; intervene only when children seem to be unable to solve the problem or when someone might get hurt. "I know you two can work out a way to take turns with the puppets. You don't need my help to solve this problem."

Help children to learn through trial and error. "Marjorie has been experimenting with different designs for kites. Some of her kites stayed up; some didn't. She can tell you what she learned from her experiences."

Allow children to exercise their growing independence in safe and age-appropriate ways. "Kristi, your mom and I agree you can walk to your dance class. She's given us written permission to let you leave the program on your own."

Involve children in the daily operations of the program and in completing weekly chores. Rotate assignments so children can try a variety of tasks such as watering the plants, changing the pictures on the bulletin board, and checking which books are overdue.

Fostering Children's Self-Esteem

In the following situations, school-age staff are fostering children's self-esteem. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Developing a Positive and Supportive Relationship with Each Child

Mr. Denton is outside helping the children organize a volleyball game. Several other children are using the playground equipment, two are painting at easels, and another is sitting under a tree reading. Once the game gets started, Mr. Denton walks over to the playground where five-year-old Peter is climbing higher and higher. "Peter, I don't think I've ever seen you climb so high," he says. Looking down from his perch, Peter says, "Yeah, this is the highest I've ever been. I'm taller than everyone." "You sure are," says Mr. Denton. He walks over to the painters, Jaimie and Bradley. He stops to look at Jaimie's picture and says, "It looks like you're almost finished with your painting. Would you like some help hanging it up?" "In a minute," says Jaimie. "I'm not through with the sky. Look at Bradley's fish." Mr. Denton walks to the other side of the easel. "Hi, Bradley," he says. "Those are some fancy fish. I like the one with the face like a lion." "I'm ready," says Jaimie. Mr. Denton helps hang the painting, then goes to see Diego who is sitting nearby reading. "Can I interrupt?" he asks. Diego looks up and nods. "I just wondered what you're reading." Diego holds up his book—*Charley Skedaddle*, by Patricia Beatty. "Can you tell me about it?" asks Mr. Denton. Diego looks pleased to be asked. "Sure," he says. "It's about a kid my age who's a drummer boy in the Union Army during the Civil War. He runs away during a battle." They discuss the book for a while, then Mr. Denton returns to the volleyball game. He notices one team has more older children, so he asks if he can play on the other side. Several children answer at once, "Yes. We need you." Nobody on the other side objects, so Mr. Denton joins the game.

1. How did Mr. Denton build a positive and supportive relationship with each child?

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2. How did Mr. Denton's interactions with the children show respect or recognize real accomplishment?

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Helping Children Accept and Appreciate Themselves and Others

Kandace and Quintan are sharing the results of their opinion survey of children. For the past week they carried clipboards and pencils, recording children's views on many topics. Quintan and Kandace hold a large poster board between them showing the survey results. Kandace points to the first bar graph. "We asked, 'Should recycling be required?' 65% of you said yes and 35% said no. Then we asked 'Do you recycle now?' 40% said yes and 55% said no and 5% said they didn't know." Next, Quintan has a turn. "We asked, 'What's your favorite movie?' and got 25 different answers. We have lots of favorite movies!" "We also asked, 'Should children watch TV on school nights?' 54% said yes, if you've done your homework. 30% said children would get better grades if they didn't watch TV. Others were undecided." When some of the younger children begin to squirm, Ms. Kettler steps in. "You collected some interesting information. May we hang up these charts so your parents and other children can look at them later?" "Sure," says Kandace. "We made lots of charts and graphs. I did some on my computer." "Thanks for your hard work," says Ms. Kettler. After the meeting she asks Quintan, "What's the most interesting thing you learned in your survey?" "That's easy," he says. "We talked about it a lot. Everyone is different and everyone is the same!" "That's a good description of people everywhere," says Ms. Kettler.

1. How did this activity help children accept and appreciate themselves and others?

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2. What did Ms. Kettler say and do to encourage children to accept and appreciate themselves and others?

____

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Providing Children with Opportunities to Be Successful and Feel Competent

Ashleigh comes running into the school-age program. She pulls off her coat and stuffs it and her backpack in her cubby. "Ginny," she shouts as she hurries across the room. I need to talk to you." Ms. Lamont looks up from her game of pick-up sticks and says, "Hi Ashleigh. What's up?" Ashleigh talks so quickly her words run together. "This weekend I saw my cousin and she has a doll house and it has six rooms, three up and three down, and lots of furniture and wallpaper and dolls and I'm going to make one just like it. I'm going to start this afternoon." "It sounds like you were very impressed with this doll house," says Ms. Lamont. "Yeah," says Ashleigh. "And my cousin made lots of the stuff inside the house so I know I could do it too. I've drawn some designs and started collecting stuff I can use. I have wooden spools to use as tables and fabric scraps for curtains and bedspreads." Ms. Lamont asks her, "Building and decorating a doll house is a big job. Is this something you will do at home or at the program?" "Well," says Ashleigh, "I was thinking we could build a big doll house in the woodworking area, or maybe use some boxes taped together. And I could organize a club for making the furniture and dolls and decorating the house." "That's a great idea. If more children are involved the job won't seem so big," replies Ms. Lamont. "You can discuss your idea with the other kids." "Okay," says Ashleigh. "There's Darlene and Scott. I want to tell them about the doll house. See you later."

1. **Why did Ms. Lamont ask if Ashleigh was planning to build the doll house at home or at the program?**

2. **How did Ms. Lamont help Ashleigh to feel competent?**

Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Sense of Self

The more you know about yourself (likes, dislikes, learning style, opinions, feelings) and your background (culture, home life, school experiences, successes, failures), the more sensitive and supportive you can be of children from different backgrounds. How you interact and respond to children conveys your respect and acceptance of them. And that is what most children, and most people, ultimately want from others.

Examining your own personal experiences and preferences will help you understand how they affect your interactions.

Before you can help children to value themselves and others, appreciate differences, and feel free to bring their own culture into the program, it is important for you as a program staff member to take a look at yourself. How did you come to be who you are today? Our past experiences unconsciously guide us in forming our personalities, attitudes, feelings toward ourselves and others, and our reactions to others.

With greater personal awareness, you will be able to help children appreciate their own differences as individuals. You can help them feel that they do not have to be like everyone else, or to ignore how they do things at home. There is a place for everyone in the program and we are all alike and different in many ways.

Listed below are questions to help you consider how experiences in your childhood might influence your views of others today.[2]

How did your childhood influence your opinions and expectations?

- Was it okay to be noisy and physically active in your home/community? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Was it okay for boys to cry? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Were girls allowed to play "rough"—climb trees, get dirty? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Was it rude to look adults directly in the eye when they were talking to you? Yes ☐ No ☐

How was your racial/ethnic identify described to you? Were there any characteristics of your group that were described as special? What about other ethnic groups?

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[2] Adapted with permission from Diane T. Dodge, Judy R. Jablon, and Toni S. Bickart, *Constructing Curriculum for the Primary Grades* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc, 1994), pp. 213-214.

How has the media's labeling of different groups influenced you at different times during your life?

What messages did you receive about your family's socio-economic position?

What types of exposure did you have to people with mental or physical disabilities?

What messages did you receive about "being smart?" Were boys treated differently from girls?

How important was the ability to express yourself verbally? Was it acceptable to speak when others were speaking (did everyone talk at the same time)?

Were some children always teased or avoided by others? Why weren't these children accepted?

We can keep, change, or do away with our beliefs.

As you recall your experiences growing up and what was valued in your home and your community, you will probably come to realize that you no longer value the same things as you did as a child. You'll probably be able to make a connection, as well, to how your experiences (or lack of experiences) with people of different backgrounds has helped to shape how you interact with people today. With this awareness of your beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions, you can decide which ones you want to keep, change, or do away with altogether.

We are all influenced by our past. We make decisions and respond to others based on our prior experiences, what we've been taught, what has been successful and what has not. As professionals, we can use our experiences to help us understand children and to become aware of the influences children may have in their lives that affect who they are and their sense of identity.

Question and challenge your attitudes and beliefs. Ask yourself: "What are the reasons that I have trouble working with Casey?" "Why am I uncomfortable around disabled people? Have I really ever interacted with anyone who had a disability?"

Reflect on and check your reactions to situations that occur on a regular basis (especially if you have strong reactions to something). "It really makes me angry when Maya won't look at me when I talk to her. It seems like bad upbringing to me. Could there be a cultural difference that I'm not aware of?" It's a good idea to become your own personal gauge. The more you do this, the better you'll become at detecting invalid messages that may be influencing you.

Talk with other staff members as a way to get a fresh look at things. "Frank, I'm having a lot of difficulty this past week with L'nora. Will you observe me this week to see if you can help me see why we're having such a personality clash?"

Your notion of who you are and how you'd like to be identified affects all aspects of your life. If you have a strong sense of yourself—your interests, strengths, weaknesses, attitudes, learning styles—and have been accepted and responded to positively because of who you are, you will likely feel good about who you are and what you do. By knowing yourself, you can help children by modeling a positive sense of self and guide them in developing their individual skills and abilities to feel competent and good about themselves.

Awareness of yourself is key to helping children feel capable.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of the module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to build children's sense of self. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Developing a Positive and Supportive Relationship with Each Child	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Observing children to identify what makes them unique—personality, learning styles, temperament, strengths, interests, and needs—and letting them know you value their individuality.	☐	☐	☐
2. Listening carefully to children and taking their concerns seriously without interrupting, judging, or giving unasked-for advice.	☐	☐	☐
3. Showing children in many ways that they are enjoyable to be with.	☐	☐	☐
4. Knowing what each child is able to do and showing you value each child's unique skills and characteristics.	☐	☐	☐
5. Learning words in the native language of children whose first language is not English.	☐	☐	☐
6. Working with parents and colleagues to make sure each child receives the individual attention he or she needs.	☐	☐	☐
7. Showing children you have a positive relationship with their parents and that their family's involvement is both valued and appreciated.	☐	☐	☐
8. Letting children know they are cared for by offering gentle physical or nonverbal contact—a hug, a touch, a smile.	☐	☐	☐
9. Identifying children's interests through observation, surveys, and conversations; using this information to plan activities and provide materials.	☐	☐	☐

Helping Children Accept and Appreciate Themselves and Others

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Offering a wide variety of activities that do not limit children's options because of individual differences; avoiding biased remarks regarding gender, disabilities, culture, ethnic background, or any other differences.	☐	☐	☐
11. Making sure the program's environment and activities help children learn about and appreciate a variety of cultures and ethnic groups.	☐	☐	☐
12. Acknowledging children's efforts and accomplishments.	☐	☐	☐
13. Encouraging children to take pride in their efforts and accomplishments.	☐	☐	☐
14. Reinforcing children's behavior when they cooperate with others, help someone achieve a goal, or show that they value each other's accomplishments.	☐	☐	☐
15. Offering sports and games that help children learn to value fairness, cooperation, and personal growth.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Children With Opportunities to Be Successful and Feel Competent

16. Providing opportunities for children to develop leadership skills.	☐	☐	☐
17. Helping children deal with setbacks by accepting their feelings about failures and responding respectfully.	☐	☐	☐
18. Encouraging children to solve their own problems, intervening only when they seem unable to find a solution or when someone might get hurt.	☐	☐	☐
19. Encouraging children to learn through trial and error.	☐	☐	☐

Providing Children With Opportunities to Feel Successful and Competent (continued)	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
20. Involving children in the daily operations of the program and in completing weekly chores.	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing a wide variety of materials, equipment, and activities to meet a wide range of abilities.	☐	☐	☐
22. Allowing children to exercise their growing independence in safe and age-appropriate ways.	☐	☐	☐
23. Providing children with time and resources needed to pursue their interests or master a skill.	☐	☐	☐
24. Allowing children to choose what they want to do and to choose not to participate in an activity.	☐	☐	☐
25. Helping children gain the skills they need to complete a task so they can overcome fear of failure.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 8, Self.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Foster Self-Esteem 85
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Learning Activity I.
Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Foster Self-Esteem

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify the stages of socio-emotional development of school-age children; and
- use what you know about children to promote a positive sense of self.

Erikson's Stages of Socio-Emotional Development

Psychologist Erik Erikson has outlined eight stages of socio-emotional development from infancy to old age. Children (and adults) must deal with the challenges of each stage before they pass to the next one. If these challenges are handled successfully, children's socio-emotional development is enhanced. Socio-emotional development is the foundation for self-esteem.

Erikson's first stage of development is **trust**. Infants develop a sense of trust when the adults who care for them respond quickly to their basic needs. Responsive adults help infants to trust their world and feel safe. They begin to explore the environment, try new activities, develop new skills, and learn how to interact with others. Establishing a sense of trust is essential to the development of autonomy, which generally occurs during the toddler years.

Autonomy is about being independent, doing things for oneself, making decisions, and exploring the world. One reason toddlers like to say "no" and insist on doing everything themselves is to assert their growing independence. Autonomy is essential to the development of initiative, which generally occurs during the preschool years.

Initiative describes the active, talkative, and creative life of preschoolers. They demonstrate their growing initiative as they use their new social, physical, and cognitive skills to build, draw, mold, paint, climb, and swing.

When children enter school, Erikson says they begin the stage of **industry**. During this period (approximately 5 to 12 years of age) children focus on developing the physical, cognitive, and social skills they need for their work in school and life. They acquire a realistic self-image, discovering what they can and cannot do. They come to understand who they are in relation to others. You can support children's sense of industry by encouraging them to pursue their interests and learn to work with others.

Erikson's last three stages cover adolescence through old age. They focus on intimacy, the ability to reach out to others, and a reflection on one's life. Erikson's message is that socio-emotional development continues throughout our lives.

Helping School-Age Children Develop Self-Esteem[3]

Most school-age children care about how well they perform a skill or complete a task. As preschoolers they might have been content to experiment with all the different colors at the easel; now they want to make something "good." At this age, children begin to evaluate their performance against accepted standards, and compare themselves to their peers. These comparisons can lower self-esteem: "Marta was moved to a higher reading group, but I wasn't, so I must be stupid."

Children typically view themselves in terms of extremes—smart or stupid, good or bad. You can help them understand that each child follows his or her own pattern and timetable for growth; one is not better than another. Reassure them that over time they will develop and increase their skills in many areas—reading, bike riding, or painting. Help them understand that because each person is unique, they are likely to be better at some things than others.

Younger school-age children tend to think they can do something well if they try harder. They may feel very disappointed when their efforts do not always result in success. As children get older, they begin to see ability as something a person either has or does not have. They view another child's seemingly effortless accomplishments as signs of great ability. To develop a realistic sense of their own skills, children may need adult guidance and support to stick with a project. You can help children recognize their many strengths and understand that, while it is nice to have a special skill or talent, how one uses the talent is very important.

For school-age children, acceptance by friends is critically important. The ability to make and keep friends has a great impact on the development of self-esteem. Some children don't know how to make friends or join a group. The harder they try, the more they are rejected. If a child in your program has trouble making friends, you can help that child learn more effective approaches. By observing the child's interactions with peers, you can figure out what is needed and be a coach. Social skills are important in childhood and throughout life. (This topic is also addressed in Module 9, Social.)

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[3] Based with permission on Nancy E. Curry and Carl N. Johnson, ***Beyond Self-Esteem: Developing a Genuine Sense of Human Value*** (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990), pp. 67-87 and 129-148.

School-age children can use words instead of their fists when they are angry. But their words can be painful. The angry language may be directed against the child ("I hate you") rather than the goal ("I want a turn on the swings"). Most children understand and accept each other's bad behavior as a normal part of friendship; however, such personal attacks can be quite painful for children who are not able to take them in stride. They may need adult assistance to understand how a friend can be nice one minute and hurtful the next. (It may help to remind the child of a time when he or she said or did something that hurt a friend, even though it was unintentional.)

Try these suggestions.

There are many ways you can help children develop self-esteem. Some suggestions follow:

Encourage children as they tackle a difficult task. When a child is completing a homework assignment, writing a story, or building an obstacle course, provide information and encouragement that will help him or her be successful.

Plan activities that allow children to be totally involved over a long period of time. Allow children to determine when they are finished, rather than setting a predetermined time limit.

Help children set reasonable goals and break those goals down into manageable tasks. "Writing and illustrating a book is a big job, Corinna. Can you think of some ways to break the job down into smaller tasks? For example, you might want to start with an outline."

Help children think about the consequences of their actions. "How do you think Albert felt when you made fun of his new haircut? Is there something you can do so you can be friends again?"

Applying Your Knowledge

Each of the charts that follow give one example of behaviors typical of children at ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12, and how staff might respond to foster children's self-esteem. In the blank spaces following each example, add a typical behavior of a child in your program and how you responded to promote the child's self-esteem.

As you complete the charts that follow, keep in mind that many of the examples of children's behavior and staff responses apply to more than one age group. Developmentally appropriate programs are based on a knowledge of child development and are responsive to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Therefore, it is important to observe children regularly, and to use what you learn to individualize the program.

Responding to Children in Ways that Foster Self-Esteem

Typical Behavior of a 5- to 7-Year-Old Child	Staff Response
Gillian is drawing a picture. She erases her work several times and she makes holes in the paper. Unhappy about the way it looks, she tears up the picture.	Let Gillian know you understand that it is important to her to draw a picture that meets her own standards for being "right" or "good." Show her where to find some thicker paper that is less likely to rip and some soft erasers that make it easier to erase.

Typical Behavior of an 8- to 10-Year-Old Child	Staff Response
Trey is having trouble learning his multiplication tables. This is the first time he has been asked to memorize something. He feels frustrated and says he is too stupid to learn multiplication.	Explain that many people have trouble memorizing. Let Trey know that people use a variety of strategies to memorize information such as the following: using flash cards, playing games that involve multiplication, visualizing the correct answer, posting math facts at home on the bathroom mirror or on the refrigerator, working with another child who is also learning the tables. Offer to help figure out which strategies might work best for him. Follow up on the offer if he seems interested.

Typical Behavior of an 11- to 12-Year-Old Child	Staff Response
Stacy thinks she is too old for the school-age program. She says the activities are boring and the younger children are "babies."	Involve Stacy in planning activities and selecting materials. Give her a blank schedule and ask her to fill it out for an ideal day at the program. Ask for her ideas on how to make the program more interesting for her age group. Suggest she talk with her friends to find out what they would like to do at the program. Implement some of the suggested activities, then meet with the older children to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities.

Discuss with your trainer how your responses were appropriate for each child and how they helped him or her develop self-esteem.

Learning Activity II.

Observing Individual Children

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- observe children carefully and regularly to get to know what makes each one unique; and
- use this information to help each child develop a sense of identify and self-esteem.

Use observation to learn about individual children.

Because every child is different, how you promote a positive sense of self will depend on what you know about each child. One of the best ways to learn about a child is to observe and write down what that child does over a short period of time. You will be surprised how much you can learn just by watching and noting everything you see and hear. For example, during an observation you may notice that Sarah, who usually forgets to wash her hands before snack, finally remembers. You can tell her later you noticed she remembered to wash her hands—and thus let her know that you noticed and valued her positive behavior.

To complete a careful five-minute observation of a child, arrange a time when you will have no other responsibilities. Pick a time when the child will be actively involved with others. This will give you the most useful information. Use index cards or a notebook to jot down everything you see, including:

- where the child is in the room;
- what the child does;
- what materials the child uses;
- who the child interacts with; and
- what the child says.

Work with your colleagues to apply information gained through observation.

Later, review your notes and share the information with your colleagues. Together, you can discuss what you learned about the child and plan ways to respond to his or her skills, interests, and needs. You can also establish a system for conducting regular observations of each child.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you complete a five- to ten-minute observation of a child. (You might want to review Module 12, Program Management, Learning Activity I: Using a Systematic Approach to Observing and Recording.) Begin by reading the example below. Then choose a child to observe either indoors or outdoors. During the observation, make quick notes about what the child does and says, who the child interacts with, and his or her facial expressions.

After the observation, spend a few minutes adding any details you left out. Review your notes and think about what you learned about the child. Then answer the questions on the blank form that follows.

Observing a Child

(Example)

Child: *Brett* **Age:** *10 years* **Date:** *January 10*

Setting: *Breakfast* **Time:** *7:45 A.M.*

Observation Notes

Brett sits next to Victor. Both are laughing. Brett asks Victor to pass juice. Victor passes pitcher. Brett pours some in glass. Spills some on table. Drinks juice, puts cup down. Asks Victor if he's done. Victor says, "Almost." Brett stands up, clears dishes. Gets sponge. Wipes spilled juice. Asks Victor if he's ready. Victor says, "Yes. Do you want to play chess?" Brett looks at clock. "Not enough time. How about Connect Four?" "Okay. I want to be red." Brett smiles. Boys walk to shelves. Brett gets out game. Sets it up. Victor takes red checkers. Brett takes black. Victor makes a move. Brett has serious look on his face.

Review your notes, think about what you learned about the child, and answer these questions.

What do you think the child was feeling? Describe any behavior that tells you how the child was feeling.

Brett seemed to enjoy being with Victor. They get along well. Brett laughed and smiled. He waited for Victor. He smiled when Victor said he wanted to be red. He had a serious look on his face as the game began. He seems to take games seriously.

What did you learn about this child that might affect his or her sense of self?

Brett seems responsible. He wiped the spilled juice. He seems to be good at negotiating. He showed respect for Victor by suggesting a game when he saw there was not enough time for chess. He let Victor use the red checkers.

How can you use this information to foster self-esteem?

I can provide opportunities for Brett to use his leadership skills—for example, he might want to help a younger child learn to play a game. When other children are having trouble working out a problem I can ask Brett if he would be willing to help them negotiate a solution. Next time I see him showing initiative—such as when he wiped the table—I can offer genuine praise and appreciation for his behavior.

Observing a Child

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Setting: ________________________________ **Time:** ________________

Observation Notes

Review your notes, think about what you learned about the child, and answer these questions.

What do you think the child was feeling? Describe any behavior that tells you how the child was feeling.

What did you learn about this child that might affect his or her sense of self?

How can you use this information to foster self-esteem?

It would be helpful to repeat this activity for another five- to ten-minute period with the same child to collect more information. Plan to observe and get to know other children in the program over the next few weeks. Discuss your observations and how you plan to use the information you collected with a colleague and with your trainer.

Learning Activity III.
Responding to Each Child as an Individual

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- respect and appreciate the characteristics that make each child unique; and
- use what you learn to respond in ways that build a positive sense of self.

Each child is unique.

Each child in your program is a unique human being. By the time children begin school, they have developed the personality traits that are likely to continue throughout childhood and into their adult years. As stated in the overview, there are many factors that affect how a child develops a sense of self. School-age children have many influences in their lives—parents, siblings, and other family members; neighbors; teachers and friends at school; and school-age staff. In addition, children's development is affected by their culture, ethnicity, place of worship, and involvement in community activities such as organized sports and scouts. It is important to learn about each child and the context (home, school, and community) in which he or she is growing up. By getting to know each child, you demonstrate respect and appreciation for his or her unique characteristics. When children know they are respected and appreciated, they learn to value themselves and others. This is the essence of self-esteem.

Although most children pass through the same stages of development in the same order, each child develops according to an individual timeline which can be faster or slower than the "norm" for a specific age group. In addition, children's development is uneven—a child may be more advanced than her age-mates in one area (for example, riding a two-wheeler before her friends have mastered this physical skill) and less advanced in another (for example, learning to do long division after most of her peers). It is important to use the stages of development as guidelines while remembering that within any age group there can be great variation.

Your experiences can influence how you view children in the program.

Your own experiences as a child, as a school-age staff member, and perhaps as a parent affect your expectations of children's behavior. For example, you may have strong memories of your own school days and how you and your friends felt and behaved in different situations. A child in the school-age program may remind you of nieces or nephews, children you worked with in another job, or one of your siblings. In addition, if you are a person who prefers quiet activities you may find it hard to understand a child who is happiest when fully involved—physically, cognitively, and emotionally—in routines and activities. You will need to spend more time getting to know the child so you can respond in ways that support the child's needs and interests. Your experiences and memories influence how you view the children in your program.

Many factors affect a child's temperament.

Other factors that affect a child's "uniqueness" are the inborn characteristics that determine his or her temperament. Beginning in infancy, a child's temperament affects how he or she responds to people and environments. For example, some infants are sensitive to light, sound, texture, and temperature; they might become upset when changes in the environment startle them. Other infants seem less aware of what's going on around them and need human interaction to become engaged. Children's temperament can cause them to vary in the following ways:

- **Activity level**. Some children are always on the move; others are content to sit and read or work on a puzzle for long periods of time. It is important to accept and plan for a wide range of activity levels.
- **Regularity of body rhythms**. Some children have highly regular body rhythms; they function most effectively when routines—meals, snacks, resting after kindergarten—occur at the same time each day. Children who have less predictable body rhythms may need flexible schedules for routines.
- **Adaptability**. Some children find it easy to get used to new situations and people. Others need extra time to adapt to changes and to get to know new people.
- **Intensity**. Some children are very intense; they experience emotions at extreme levels and get very excited, angry, happy, or fearful. Children who tend to be less intense have "low-key" responses to people and situations.
- **Distractibility**. Some children can focus on what they are doing without being distracted by other activities, for example, other children's games. Highly distractible children, however, may have trouble sticking with an activity. For these children, staff can repeat directions and help them stay with a topic in conversations.
- **Persistence**. Some children are very persistent; they can entertain themselves, work at learning the rules to a new game, and read or do homework for extended periods of time. Other children may need encouragement to stick with a difficult task or frequent breaks while working on a homework assignment.

The temperamental extremes described above are neither good nor bad traits. They describe the different ways children (and adults) may respond to people and experiences in their lives. As you get to know each child, keep these characteristics in mind. You can use information about each child's temperament as you plan and implement the program.

There may be children in your program with diagnosed learning disabilities.

There may be children in your program who have been professionally diagnosed with learning disabilities. (Many experts view them as "differences" rather than disabilities.) One example is Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Children with ADD have difficulty receiving, understanding, or expressing language. In recent years, great progress has been made in identifying these conditions and understanding how they affect children's self-esteem, social skills, and physical and cognitive abilities. As a result, many more children are diagnosed than in the past—a conservative estimate is that 5% of the population has ADD.[4] Often children with learning differences have creative abilities and strengths that are not tapped in a typical school environment. Their difficulty in performing required school tasks can cause lowered self-esteem and social problems. It is important for school-age staff to recognize how learning differences affect a child's participation in the program. Some examples of typical behaviors of children with ADD follow:

- During club meetings Deon taps his fingers and fidgets. Once the hands-on activities begin he is very focused and has many creative ideas.
- Gina frequently leaves her homework papers at the program. She puts them in the wrong cubby, leaves them in the quiet area, or fails to notice them falling out of her notebook. She gets in trouble at school and has to stay in from recess to redo her work.
- Yolanda is usually eager to try new games and activities. On a trip to the museum she asked the tour guide more questions than anyone else.
- Marcus often has hurt feelings. He doesn't pick up on social cues and messages and tends to take words very literally. When Charles tells him, "You can't be my friend," he doesn't understand that Charles is venting frustration and doesn't mean to end their friendship forever.

School-age staff can assist children with ADD.

As you can see from these examples, conditions such as ADD can have both positive and negative consequences. Deon's fidgeting gives way to great creativity and Yolanda's eagerness exposes her to new experiences and information. On the other hand, Gina's forgetfulness leads to staying in from recess—an essential physical outlet for many children with ADD. School-age staff can help her develop a system for remembering her homework. Marcus also needs some assistance. Staff can help him to recognize nonverbal cues and understand that people don't always mean what they say in anger and frustration.

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[4] Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratley, M.D., *Driven to Distraction, Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood through Adulthood* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1994), p. 41.

Talk with parents frequently about their child's learning disability.

When you know a child has a diagnosed learning disability (difference), you should talk with parents frequently to share information and successful approaches. Parents may hear many complaints about their child's behavior, so it is particularly important to share your positive observations—"Wendell came up with a great way to make his mobile balance," or "Sabrina spent the whole afternoon writing and illustrating a story." You can also contact one of the following organizations to learn more about supporting children with learning differences.

CHADD (Children and Adults With Attention Deficit Disorders)
NW 70th Avenue, Suite 308
Plantation, FL 33317
305-587-4599

Learning Disabilities Association of America
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
412-341-1515

Try these suggestions.

Here are several suggestions to help you get to know and respond to individual children.

Accept and respect individual differences without trying to change children. Children need to know that other people accept them in order to learn to value themselves. Feelings of self-worth enable children to accept and respect others.

Encourage children to express their ideas and opinions without judging whether they are "good" or bad." Children learn to think and solve problems when they know their ideas will not be ridiculed or censored.

Be aware of your own style. Are you a person who likes a lot of physical contact? Do you prefer quiet times, or enjoy excitement? Do you get angry easily? Are your feelings hurt easily? How does your own style affect your interactions with children?

Observe children frequently, especially those with whom you find it hard to work or to understand. Record their behavior for five minutes, several times a day for a week. Ask yourself what these children seem to be feeling and thinking. Look for patterns to give you insight into their behavior.

Ask a colleague, your supervisor, or your trainer to observe a child whose behavior you feel you do not understand or whose behavior you are having trouble handling. Compare notes. Often a fresh perspective gives insight.

Remember some children will be harder for you to understand than others. Building relationships with all children in the program is part of being a professional. Although it's easy to spend lots of time with the children who are your favorites, make a point of spending individual time with every child each day or week (depending on the size of your program). Chances are as you get to know each child, you will discover something interesting or appealing about the child you didn't see at first.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on a child in the program whose behavior you feel you don't understand or with whom you find it hard to work. First, answer the questions about that child's behavior. Then plan three strategies for getting to know this child. Try your strategies for a week and see what you've learned about the child that will help you support his or her sense of self. Begin by reading the examples that follow.

Responding to Each Child as an Individual

(Example)

Child: *Wendy* **Age:** *10-1/2 years* **Dates:** *March 3-7*

What is it about this child that makes it hard for you to understand or work with him or her?

Wendy is very bossy. She tends to take over any activity she gets involved in. She makes fun of the younger children when they make mistakes.

Think about yourself. Is there something about you that might make it hard for you to understand or work with this child?

I'm the youngest of three girls in my family. My older sisters often bossed me around and teased me until I cried. I may overreact when I see older children taking over and making the younger ones feel bad about themselves.

List three strategies to help you get to know and work with this child. Use each strategy over the next week and record brief observations of what happens.

Strategy	What Happened
I will spend time with her.	*I talked with Wendy about her ideas for the next issue of the newspaper. She had a lot of good ideas and wants to try as many as possible. I helped her make a list of the ideas she was most interested in pursuing.* *I observed Wendy leading the meeting. She seemed to want the newspaper to be perfect. When a younger child made a mistake she made fun of him. After the meeting I talked with her about how things went. I asked her to think about how her comments made the younger club members feel. She said her older sister makes fun of her all the time and it's no big deal.*
I will observe her.	*Wendy was working on her math homework. She spent a long time on one problem. She erased her answer twice. When she finished the problem she looked satisfied.*
I will read about young adolescents—what they're like and what they need from adults.	*I learned this is typical behavior for young adolescents. Maybe Wendy is still defining who she is. She may be unsure of her own abilities, which leads her to make fun of the younger children.*

Summarize what you learned about this child:

Wendy has a lot of good ideas—too many for her to carry out by herself. She is not a "natural born" leader. It is difficult for her to accept the work of other children that is not "perfect" and does not meet her standards.

Wendy is open to learning new skills—she was willing to learn how to set priorities.

Wendy has an older sister who is a model for the behavior Wendy uses with the younger children—making fun of them when they make mistakes. Wendy can handle her sister's comments (or at least says she can).

Wendy shows a lot of persistence when doing a difficult task.

How will you use what you learned to help the child gain a sense of self and develop self-esteem?

I will help Wendy learn skills, such as listening and communicating, used by effective leaders.

I will help her understand that her personal standards are just that—personal—and she will continue to be disappointed if she expects other children to perform exactly as she would.

I will help her understand that everyone should be allowed to participate in writing the newspaper at his or her own level.

I will suggest pursuing an interest by herself—for example, she might want to write and illustrate a short story.

I will offer Wendy genuine praise for her strengths—such as her persistence—and suggest activities that are appropriate for a child who enjoys getting very involved in difficult tasks.

Responding to Each Child as an Individual

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Dates:** ________________

What is it about this child that makes it hard for you to understand or work with him or her?

Think about yourself. Is there something about you that might make it hard for you to understand or work with this child?

List three strategies to help you get to know and work with this child. Use each strategy over the next week and record brief observations of what happens.

Strategy	What Happened

Summarize what you learned about this child:

How will you use what you learned to help this child gain a sense of self and develop self-esteem?

Discuss your strategies and plans for continuing to respond to this child with your colleagues and your trainer.

Learning Activity IV.

Talking to Children in Ways That Show Respect

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- talk to children in ways that let them know they are respected and understood; and
- help children learn to accept themselves and others.

The words you use can show respect and understanding.

Some children have highly developed verbal skills and find it easy to express themselves; however, many children need help identifying and communicating their feelings and ideas. As a school-age staff member, you model appropriate ways of using language. When those words are respectful and supportive, children will want to listen and use the information. For example, you might say to seven-year-old Monique, "Try putting less paint on your brush, then it is less likely to spill." Monique will appreciate your concern and positive suggestion. She will feel that she is a competent person who can learn the skills she needs to carry out her plans and ideas.

Sometimes adults lose control, take out their anger on children, or fail to pay attention to what a child needs. These behaviors can make children question their own worth. They may think our words carry more meaning than we intend. When a child hears an angry or thoughtless statement, "Can't you sit still and listen? Have you got ants in your pants?" he or she may translate the words into a negative self-image. "I am a bad person because I can't sit still." Words that demonstrate respect and caring help build a child's self-esteem. "I can see you are having trouble sitting for so long. Would you like to take a break and come back to this later?"

Give your full attention to children and listen carefully.

Whether delivering praise, a reprimand, or instructions for an activity, it is important to talk to children using the same courteous voice you use with your friends and family. Begin by giving the child your full attention. Stand near the child and establish eye contact. Listen carefully so you can determine what he or she is really saying and feeling. As you look and listen, think about your own experiences. This can help you understand what the child is feeling. Your response should show you understand and respect the child. An example follows.

> Ms. Grimaldi watches and listens to Jake, who recently joined the program. He stands near some children who are weaving on a large loom. Jake watches them for several minutes. "That's an ugly thing they're making. It looks really stupid," he says to nobody in particular. Ms. Grimaldi walks over and says, "Jake, we have a lot of different weaving materials and looms. Children here can plan and make anything they like. They decide how they want to use the materials. When they're finished they can hang up their weavings or take them home. If children need help getting started, I can show them how to set up the loom and suggest some materials to weave with."

Ms. Grimaldi could tell by the way Jake was watching the other children that he was interested in learning to weave. She thought he called their weaving ugly because he was worried about how his weaving would turn out. In this situation Ms. Grimaldi listened carefully to what Jake said and figured out what he was feeling. She responded to him in a way that showed she understood he was feeling worried and she respected his concerns.

A person less skilled in listening and talking with children might have said, "The weaving isn't ugly. It isn't nice to say that about other children's work. How would you like it if someone told you your work was ugly?" This statement would make Jake feel bad. It would also leave him still worried about his own ability to try something new.

Talking to children in respectful ways takes some practice. It may be a while before new ways of listening and talking to children feel natural. There are many opportunities throughout the day to talk with children in ways that communicate acceptance and respect.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you read several examples of how to talk with children in different situations. Then you write down what you might say in typical situations to show respect for children. If possible, tape record or videotape yourself talking with children to learn more about how your interactions affect a child's sense of self.

Showing Respect When Talking to Children

(Example)

Margo says to Shawn, "You're taking up too much room. Get your fat butt off the couch." What would you say to Margo?

> *"Margo, if you need more room on the couch, you can ask Shawn to please move over. In this program we all try hard to talk to each other in ways that do not hurt feelings."*

Trish sits at the table drinking juice. When Lionel bumps into her chair, she spills juice on her shirt. Trish hits Lionel. What would you say to Trish?

> *"Trish, it's okay to be angry with people, but it's not okay to hit them. You can tell him how you feel. Say, 'I'm angry with you, Lionel. You made me spill juice on my shirt. I think you should be more careful.'"*

Gail interrupts your conversation with another child because she wants you to hear her poem. What would you say to Gail?

> *"Gail, I know you want me to listen to your new poem, but right now I am talking to Justin. I will look for you when we're finished. That will be in about 10 minutes."*

Showing Respect When Talking to Children

Michael strikes out in the softball game. He refuses to leave home plate, saying, "It's not fair. That was a lousy pitch. I should get another." What would you say to Michael?

Ramona is the last child to be picked up. She is sitting by the window staring at the parking lot. What would you say to Ramona?

Todd tells you he plans to be an astronaut. What would you say to Todd?

Alamin gets teased by the other children because she is Muslim and doesn't participate in the holidays. What would you say to the other children?

Lori sees some friends from school hanging out on the fields used by the program and walks over to them. You notice Lori's friends are smoking cigarettes. What would you say to Lori?

Discuss your responses with your trainer.

See and Hear Your Interactions

If you were able to tape record or videotape yourself talking with children, listen to or view the recording to determine what you did well and what you would like to improve. You might want to review the tape with your trainer and discuss the children's verbal and nonverbal reactions to your communication.

Learning Activity V.
Promoting Children's Sense of Competence

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- provide the right level of support to individual children;
- create an environment that helps children achieve competence; and
- plan for a wide range of abilities and interests.

As children gain new skills they develop a sense of competence.

School-age children are developing the physical, cognitive, and social skills they will use throughout their lives. As children acquire new skills, they develop a sense of their own competence that contributes to self-esteem.

The development of competence can also be tied to four conditions that lead to self-esteem. People with self-esteem:[5]

- **feel connected** to their own bodies, friends, families, colleagues, classmates, clubs, teams, ethnic or cultural groups;
- **have a sense of being unique** because they can identify their personal qualities and attributes and know these are respected and valued by others;
- **feel powerful** because they can use their skills, make choices and decisions, solve problems, and do things on our own; and
- **have models on which to base their behavior**; their personal standards and values evolve from their experiences and their understanding of family, group, cultural, and societal expectations.

An example follows:

> Ten-year-old Carmelita feels **connected**. She attends a bilingual school where her family's native language is used in many classes; belongs to a gymnastics club; attends her church Sunday school; enjoys spending time with her cousins; and decorates her room with pennants from her favorite baseball

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[5] Based on Harris Clemes and Reynold Bean, *How to Raise Children's Self-Esteem* (Los Angeles, CA: Price, Stern, Sloan Publishers, Inc., 1978), p. 16.

> team. Her feelings of **uniqueness** are enhanced through working hard to be a better gymnast, expressing herself through writing and painting, and knowing that her parents and coach value her talents and enjoy being with her. She feels **powerful** because she has opportunities to make decisions and solve problems at school, at home, and at the school-age program. She has clear values and personal standards for behavior because she has **models**. She understands the expectations of her family, church, culture, school, coach, and of society in general. In addition to these external sources of expectations, she has her own goals—to master a new routine on the balance beam, to be nicer to her younger brother, to stop biting her fingernails.

The adults in Carmelita's life—parents, other family members, teachers, school-age staff, her coach—have helped her develop a sense of competence. They provided the resources, encouragement, praise, and respect that allowed her to develop and use a variety of skills and to experience pride in her accomplishments.

You can play an important role in helping children develop a sense of competence. By providing the right level of support to individual children, creating an appropriate environment, and planning for a wide range of abilities and interests you help children feel capable, learn to interact positively with others, and develop a sense of responsibility. In the program's safe and accepting environment, children can practice skills they already have, and learn new ones.

Providing the Right Level of Support

Every child has his or her own learning style and capacity to learn. As a school-age staff member, you use your knowledge of individual capabilities and limitations to provide the right kind of support and guidance as children approach new tasks. One of the hardest things to know is when to offer help to a child attempting something new, and when to withdraw this support gradually so the child can manage on his or her own. Observe children closely so you will know who needs support throughout the learning process, who needs words of encouragement, and who simply needs you to wave or smile at them as they try a new activity.

For example, when Zoe and Rosa announce that they are going to write a play, Ms. Alexander knows they will ask for her help if they need it. On the other hand, when she sees Joe and Alec take out a new board game, she keeps her eyes and ears open. She knows they may have difficulty reading and understanding the rules for the game and are likely to ask for assistance. If you are careful to intervene only when necessary, you can help children acquire new skills in a way that builds their sense of competence.

Creating an Environment That Builds a Sense of Competence

The program's indoor and outdoor environment—its space, furniture, equipment, interest areas, materials, daily schedule, and the staff and children—can help children feel competent. The furniture and equipment must be the right size, sturdy, safe, and age-appropriate. If the materials are broken, have missing pieces, or are too simple to be of interest, the children will become frustrated or bored, and they are likely to misuse them. If the playground equipment is too small for school-age children to use, you will constantly have to remind them to keep off. Children will not be challenged to learn new skills.

Materials and equipment should be stored where children can reach them and return them when done. When children have access to the things they need—games, sports equipment, art materials—they feel independent because they don't have to rely on adults. The more they can explore the interest areas, make and carry out plans, and use their growing skills on their own, the more pride they will have in themselves. Their sense of competence grows with their increasing responsibility.

The daily schedule, including how routines are handled, can also contribute to promoting a sense of competence. A schedule with many opportunities for free choice lets children make decisions. Offering a self-service snack allows children to decide for themselves when and how much they would like to eat.

Group meetings are a time to promote feelings of connectedness. Cecily can announce she is forming an Inventor's Club; you can ask the children for ideas for next month's family evening; the children can discuss how to solve a problem (for example, the younger children are getting knocked over when the older ones rush to get on the bus in the morning).

You and the other school-age staff members are the most important factors in the environment. Your knowledge of each child allows you to plan activities and provide materials that are at the right level—challenging but not overwhelming. The children who grow to trust you will be free to explore and learn from their environment—and to trust themselves as well.

Planning for a Wide Range of Abilities and Interests

Children from 5- to 12-years-old have a wide range of interests and abilities. It is important to provide materials, equipment, and activities that represent this range. For example, the choices in the arts and crafts area might range from poster paints to water colors, wide brushes to calligraphy pens, and newsprint to rice paper. Puzzles and games go from the simple to the complex. Computer games can be played at different levels. When playing softball children can hit a ball thrown by the pitcher or a ball perched on a "tee." Providing these choices allows each child to determine the skill level and challenge most appropriate for him or her.

It is also important to provide equipment and materials that respond to children's individual interests. Toby tells a staff member he would really like to learn to tie dye. The next week the program has a tie dye activity. Toby experiences his own competence as he ties the knots and dies his own T-shirt. He feels important because someone listened to him and responded to his interest. When you plan activities you know will interest a child, you are saying to that child, "You are important to me, I heard your request, and I know you will like this."

The children in your program will change a lot during the year. In fact, they change each day as they develop physically, cognitively, and socially; learn new skills; and develop new interests. To promote children's sense of competence, you will need to observe frequently and change the environment, materials, and activities to reflect children's new abilities and interests.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you will focus on one child and assess whether the four conditions that contribute to self-esteem are present in his or her life. Next, you will plan ways the school-age program can provide the conditions and thus help all children experience a sense of competence.

Encouraging Children's Competence

Child:____________________ **Age:**__________ **Date:**____________________

Describe how this child feels **connected** to his or her own body, family, friends, ethnic or cultural group, clubs, teams, and so on.

Does this child have a sense of being **unique**? What are the personal qualities and attributes that make this child unique? Are they appreciated by others?

Does this child feel **powerful**? What opportunities does the child have to use skills, make choices and decision, solve problems, be independent?

Describe the **models** in this child's life. Does the child have clear values and personal standards for behavior?

Review your responses and think about what the program can do to fulfill these conditions for all children in the program. Record your plans below.

We can help children feel **connected** by:

Supportive Interactions

Activities and Experiences

Program Schedule and Structure

We can help children have a sense of being **unique** by:

Supportive Interactions

Materials and Equipment

Activities and Experiences

Program Schedule and Structure

We can help children feel **powerful** by:

Supportive Interactions

Materials and Equipment

Activities and Experiences

Program Schedule and Structure

We can provide children with **models** by:

Supportive Interactions

Materials and Equipment

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Activities and Experiences

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Program Schedule and Structure

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Share your ideas with your colleagues and trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for fostering children's self-esteem. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned and list the skills you developed or improved.

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If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Fostering Children's Self-Esteem

Developing a Positive and Supportive Relationship with Each Child

1. **How did Mr. Denton build a positive and supportive relationship with each child?**

   a. He walked around the playground talking to individual children.

   b. He commented on what they were doing without making judgments.

   c. He offered assistance, then waited for the children's response.

2. **How did Mr. Denton's interactions with the children show respect and recognize real accomplishments?**

   a. He commented on Peter's climbing higher than ever before.

   b. He waited for Jaimie to finish her picture, then helped her hang it on the line.

   c. He talked to Bradley about his painting.

   d. He asked Diego if he wanted to talk about his book. When Diego looked up and nodded, he stayed to listen and discuss the book.

   e. He joined the volleyball game so the teams would be more evenly matched.

Helping Children Accept and Appreciate Themselves and Others

1. **How did this survey help children accept and appreciate themselves and others?**

   a. It gave children an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions.

   b. It showed the children different ideas and opinions present in the program.

   c. All the children's responses were accepted and included in the survey results.

2. What did Ms. Kettler say and do to encourage children to accept and appreciate themselves and others?

a. She provided time in the schedule for the surveyors to report to interested children.

b. She stepped in to end the presentation when the younger children lost interest.

c. She suggested the surveyors hang up their charts and graphs where parents and other children could see them.

d. She thanked the children for their hard work.

Providing Children with Opportunities to Feel Successful and Competent

1. Why did Ms. Lamont ask if Ashleigh was planning to build the doll house at home or at the program?

a. She wanted to let Ashleigh know it would be okay to build the doll house at the program.

b. She hoped Ashleigh would see the advantages of having more help for the project.

2. How did Ms. Lamont help Ashleigh to feel competent?

a. She gave Ashleigh undivided attention.

b. She listened to Ashleigh's long description of the doll house and what she planned to do.

c. She told Ashleigh she had a good idea and involving other children would make it easier to carry out the project.

d. She suggested Ashleigh discuss her idea with other children.

GLOSSARY

Autonomy	Independence; the stage when toddlers develop the ability to do things for themselves, make decisions, and explore the world.
Environment	The complete makeup of the indoor and outdoor areas used by school-age children. The environment includes the space and how it is arranged and furnished, routines, materials and equipment, planned and unplanned activities, and the people who are present.
Industry	Productivity; the stage when children develop and use their skills to accomplish tasks in school and in life.
Initiative	Self-motivation; the stage when preschool children come up with their own ideas and want to try them out.
Observation	The act of watching systematically and objectively what a child says and does to learn more about that child. The information gained from observation is used to plan activities and provide materials that address the child's temperament, needs, strengths, and interests.
Sense of self	Understanding who you are; how you identify yourself in terms of culture, environment, physical attributes, preferences, skills, experiences. A sense of self evolves throughout our lives as we continually revise our perceptions in response to our experiences and interactions with others.
Self-esteem	A sense of worth; a good feeling about oneself and one's abilities. Someone who feels connected to others, respected and valued, and able to do things successfully and independently is likely to have self-esteem.
Temperament	The nature or disposition of a child; the way a child responds to and interacts with people, materials, and situations in his or her world.
Trust	Security; the stage when infants develop deep feelings of comfort and confidence because their basic needs are met promptly, consistently, and lovingly.

Module 9: SOCIAL

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OVERVIEW

PROMOTING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INVOLVES:

- encouraging children to develop friendships and enjoy being with their peers;
- helping children understand and respect the feelings of others; and
- providing an environment and experiences that help children develop social skills.

Most school-age children have developed social skills.

Social development refers to the way children learn to get along with others and to enjoy the people in their lives. It begins when an infant responds to a familiar voice or the special touch of a parent or caregiver. It continues as toddlers first enjoy playing alongside each other and as preschool children learn to play in groups. By the time they become school-agers, children have developed a wide range of social skills that allow them to get along with their peers and to be successful members of groups—in school, on sports teams, and at the school-age program. While at times they may argue and fight, most school-age children really enjoy being with others. They are willing to make compromises so that their games and activities can continue.

Adults play an important role in promoting children's social development. School-age children enjoy spending time with their peers, so part of your job is ensuring there are plenty of opportunities for children to choose what they want to do—and who they want to do it with—during their time at the program.

Children learn many skills through their participation in the school-age program.

Through their relationships with adults and involvement in program planning and operations, children can develop social skills. You also help children learn to respect the rights of others, so everyone can enjoy the benefits of being part of a community. You help them understand their feelings and you model accepted ways to express these feelings. As a school-age staff member, you can also provide opportunities for children to become meaningfully involved in their communities.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in promoting children's social development.

Encouraging Children to Develop Friendships and Enjoy Being With Their Peers

Observe and listen to learn how individual children relate to others in the program. "Yesterday, I observed Inez teaching Frannie how to do a handstand. When Frannie fell, Inez told her, 'You almost had it that time. Try again.'"

Encourage children to help each other. "Peter, it looks like Todd could use some help carrying the street hockey equipment outside."

Include enough time for free play in the daily schedule so children can choose to play with friends during activities. "Jane, it looks like you and Torie are enjoying the new prop box."

Encourage children to solve their own conflicts. "You both want to use the computer. How can you share it or take turns using it?"

Accept children's need to establish their own identity as they create their own "culture" separate from adults. "Would you like to hear about the slang words that my friends and I used when I was your age? We used expressions such as out-of-sight, groovy, and dig it."

Observe and assist children who have difficulty being accepted by the group. "Jan, when you upset the Monopoly board on purpose, it scared the other children. Let's talk about some other ways to handle your anger when you lose a game."

Helping Children Understand and Respect the Feelings of Others

Identify your own feelings when appropriate. "Adults have disagreements with their friends, too. When I'm angry with one of my friends I try to discuss the situation to 'clear the air.' "

Accept children's feelings while helping them learn to control their actions. "It's okay to feel angry when John makes fun of you. You can tell him you're angry, but I can't let you hurt him."

Encourage children to value what makes each person a unique individual. "When Tenesha joined our group several children asked how they could learn sign language. Her mother suggested some videotapes she'd found helpful."

Use group meeting times to solve problems that involve all the children. "Several children have complained that things are missing from their cubbies. Does anyone have some ideas of what to do about the problem?"

Model positive ways to interact with others. "I have an extra pair of gloves you can wear when we go outside."

Providing an Environment and Experiences That Help Children Develop Social Skills

Involve children in establishing rules that encourage the use of social skills. "Before we see the play, let's talk about how to be a polite audience."

Provide books that help children deal with their feelings about friendship, conflicts, diversity, and similar topics. "Karen, I read this book when I was your age. What would you do if one of your friends lied to you?"

Plan multi-age activities that encourage cooperation and allow older children to play the role of leader and mentor. "Steven, would you show the younger children how to use the measuring cups and spoons?"

Provide a variety of objects and tools that encourage children to explore their world. "We have a microscope and magnifying glasses you can use to examine the sand dollars."

Provide opportunities for children to belong to groups. "Regan and Natalie want to learn more about the fish we saw at the aquarium, so they are starting an Oceanography Club. Let them know if you want to join."

Offer opportunities for children to participate in the community at large. "Homestead Farms has so many apples on their trees they want to donate some to the food bank. They would like some volunteers to help pick the apples."

Invite members of the community to the program to share their special knowledge and skills so children can feel connected to the world beyond the program. "Next week a bicycle repair person is coming to the program to talk about bike maintenance and safe riding tips."

Promoting Children's Social Development

In the following situations, school-age staff are promoting social development. As you read each one, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Encouraging Children to Develop Friendships and Enjoy Being With Their Peers

Emilio and Charles, both in third grade, are sitting in a corner telling each other jokes. Mary approaches them and says, "The Dance Club reserved this area for our rehearsal today. Would you please move? We're going to need a lot of space and you might get stepped on where you are." Emilio and Charles get up and look around for another place to sit. Charles says, "How about the quiet area, Emilio?" The two boys proceed to the quiet area. After listening to a few minutes of joke-telling and raucous laughter, Paul looks up from his homework and says, "You guys are really noisy. Find somewhere else to hang out." "But we don't have anywhere else to go," replies Emilio. Ms. Stuart has been watching the boys look for a place to settle. She steps in to make a suggestion. "I appreciate the way you two are trying not to get in the way of other activities. Would you like to move the bean bag chairs to another part of the room." "Okay," says Charles, "but where can we put them?" "Look around to see where there's some empty space," says Ms. Stuart. "How about next to the science area? There's room next to the gerbils and fish." "Yeah," says Emilio. "We can tell jokes to the animals." Charles laughs at his friend's idea and each boy grabs a chair. Twenty minutes later Ms. Stuart sees them still nestled in their chairs laughing and enjoying each other's company. She says, "You two have been laughing at each other's jokes for a long time. You must be really good friends."

1. **Why did Ms. Stuart step in to help the boys find a place to be together?**

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2. **How did Ms. Stuart support the boys' friendship?**

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Helping Children Understand and Respect the Feelings of Others

Ten-year-old Wendy is the leader for this week's group meeting. With Mr. Swensen's help she gathers the children in the large group area. Wendy follows the agenda used at every meeting. First, Mr. Swensen makes a few announcements about outdoor activities and some new board games. Then Wendy takes over. She asks if anyone wants to share something they did at the program this week that was really fun. Several children raise their hands. She calls on Shellie. "Ben and I played in the loft and pretended it was a fort." Zack interrupts, "You mean you hogged the loft all afternoon." Wendy calmly states the program's rule, "No interrupting when someone else is speaking." Zack responds, "I'm sorry. After sharing, can we talk about how long people can use the loft?" Wendy turns to Mr. Swensen. He nods his head and makes a note. Wendy continues with the sharing, "Does anyone else want to share?" After everyone who wants to has had a turn, Wendy announces, "Okay, now we can talk about problems and think of ways to solve them." Mr. Swensen steps in to help lead the discussion so Wendy can participate along with the other children. He says, "Zack, tell us about your concern and we'll try to think of some solutions. "Well," Zack begins, "I don't think it's fair for two kids to use the loft for the whole afternoon when other people want to use it, too. We need some rules."

1. **What social skills did children use during the group meeting?**

2. **How did the group meeting format help children express and understand their own feelings and those of others?**

Providing an Environment and Experiences That Help Children Develop Social Skills

A small group of older children is making final plans for tomorrow afternoon's road cleanup. (As part of a community-wide program, the school-age program has adopted a stretch of road and promised to keep it free from litter. Children age 9 and over can participate.) Clay says, "This is my first time on the clean-up crew. What am I supposed to bring?" Janine responds, "Your signed permission slip, if you haven't brought it already. And, we each bring our own trash bag. The big green ones are the strongest ones. It's a good idea to wear gloves, like gardening or work gloves." Ms. Caruso joins the conversation, "Clay, we're really glad you are joining us. We have a lot of fun and we leave behind a clean road." "Yeah," says Rico. "We started a contest to see who finds the largest piece of trash. Last time I found a washing machine. It wouldn't fit in my bag, of course, so we had to call someone else to pick it up." Ms. Caruso goes over the rest of the plans, Janine explains that everyone will wear an orange safety vest, and the meeting is over.

At the end of the day Ms. Caruso hears Clay telling his mother, "Did you remember to sign the permission form for the road cleanup? Can we drive along Chatham Road to see how dirty it is today? Then tomorrow we can drive by and you can see how clean it is." Clay's mother smiles. She turns to Ms. Caruso and comments, "It's nice to see Clay excited about work. What's your secret?"

1. **How did the road cleanup help children become involved in their community?**

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2. **How did Ms. Caruso make the clean-up task enjoyable for the children?**

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Social Development

Adults use the social skills they learned in childhood.

Adults use social skills every day. When you yield to another car in traffic, share your lunch with a colleague who forgot hers, or wait for your turn to speak at a staff meeting, you are using the social skills you learned as a child.

Sometimes you find yourself in situations where you need to adapt to a new group of people. Perhaps you just joined a choir or started a new exercise class. In both of these situations you use social skills to get to know the other group members and to adjust to the group's accepted ways of doing things. You may introduce yourself to individual members, ask for advice, and observe and follow what others do.

Some adults find it very difficult to adjust to new situations. Although this difficulty may stem from individual temperament or personality, perhaps these adults never really learned how to get to know new people when they were children.

Staff model positive social behaviors in their interactions with others.

One of the ways children learn about how society expects them to behave is by watching adults in a variety of interactions. When children see staff members working cooperatively, sharing feelings and ideas, having friendly conversations, and enjoying each other's company they are learning about social behaviors.

It is important that staff members find ways to interact—adult to adult—so children can observe them getting along with others. Sometimes staff members are so busy it's hard for them to find time to be "friends"—but when they model social behaviors for children, everyone benefits. The staff members can feel positive about their jobs and the people they work with, and the children can gain a more complete picture of adults. They see adults working out problems, sharing experiences, and cooperating with each other.

Think about how you and your colleagues model social skills. Give some examples below.

Negotiating:

Cooperating:

Solving problems:

Sharing experiences:

Positive relationships at work make your job more enjoyable and rewarding. The social skills you use and model for children are as important for their learning as they are for your mental health.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions for the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to promote children's social development. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Encouraging Children to Develop Friendships and Enjoy Being With Their Peers	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Observing and listening to learn how individual children relate to others in the program.	☐	☐	☐
2. Encouraging children to help each other.	☐	☐	☐
3. Encouraging children to solve their own conflicts.	☐	☐	☐
4. Observing and assisting children who have difficulty being accepted by their peers.	☐	☐	☐
5. Providing enough time in the daily schedule for self-selected activities so children can decide with whom they would like to be.	☐	☐	☐
6. Accepting children's need to create their own identities as they use slang and create a "culture" separate from adults.	☐	☐	☐
Helping Children Understand and Respect the Feelings of Others			
7. Identifying your own feelings, when appropriate, to model acceptable ways to express feelings.	☐	☐	☐
8. Accepting children's feelings while helping them learn to control their actions.	☐	☐	☐
9. Encouraging children to value what makes each person a unique individual.	☐	☐	☐
10. Using group meetings to solve problems that involve all the children.	☐	☐	☐
11. Modeling positive ways to interact with people of all ages.	☐	☐	☐

Providing an Environment and Experiences That Help Children Develop Social Skills	**I Do This** Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
12. Planning multi-age activities that encourage cooperation and allow older children to play the role of leader and mentor.	☐	☐	☐
13. Involving children in establishing rules that encourage use of social skills.	☐	☐	☐
14. Providing a variety of objects and tools that encourage children to explore their world.	☐	☐	☐
15. Providing books that help children deal with their feelings about friendship, conflicts, ethnic diversity, and similar topics.	☐	☐	☐
16. Providing opportunities for children to belong to groups.	☐	☐	☐
17. Offering opportunities for children to be involved in the community.	☐	☐	☐
18. Inviting community members to share their special knowledge and skills with the children.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module you will list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 9, Social.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.
Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Promote Social Development[1]

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical behaviors of school-age children; and
- use what you know about school-age children to promote their social development.

By the time they are school-age, children have already learned many social skills. Between the ages of 5 and 12, children become increasingly independent, yet are still emotionally dependent on adults. They need support and encouragement from the important adults in their lives—such as parents, teachers, and school-age staff—to help them develop and refine their social skills.

In his book *Playground Politics,* Dr. Stanley Greenspan describes three distinct phases children pass through during the school-age years. As they pass through these phases, children move from a preschool focus on fantasy and feeling to being more logical and able to reason, learn, and control their impulses. These important skills are used by children in their life at school, their relationships with parents and other family members, and in sports and other community activities. The three phases defined by Greenspan are described below.

"The World is My Oyster" ($4^1/_2$ to 7 years)

Greenspan describes the first stage ($4^1/_2$ to 7 years) as a time when children feel very important and powerful—the center of attention. They are fascinated by super heroes and heroines and imagine they too have special powers. Accept this type of play as normal for this stage of development and encourage children to put their "powers" to good use. Most of the time children at this stage know the difference between reality and fantasy; however, they may be afraid of scary figures such as witches, robbers, or monsters. Be available to listen to children who want to discuss their fears. Ask follow-up questions to help them develop their own strategies for handling fears.

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[1] Based with permission on Dr. Stanley Greenspan, *Playground Politics, Understanding the Emotional Life of Your School-Age Child* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1993).

Children of this age still rely on their families as sources of security but they also work and play with other children. Through play they express feelings, use creativity, and make sense of the world. They are fascinated by rules and may make up their own games with very specific rules and routines. Friendships are important. Some children have a special friend who is the object of much attention and affection: "I want to get a sweatshirt like Taylor has." Other children may try to manipulate their friends, "You can't play with me now because Amy is my friend today." The school-age program can support friendships by providing many opportunities for children to choose who they want to be with. In addition, you can help children resolve their disagreements and discuss ways to "make up."

Children in this age group are likely to seek your attention and affection. They like to feel close to adults and enjoy your participation in their games and play. Respond warmly when children request your attention, even if you are busy: "Hi Sarah. I'm helping these children get started on their masks. I'll come look at your picture in a minute."

At this stage, many children are defining what it means to be a boy or girl. The program should have a wide variety of books that depict males and females in positive ways. You and your colleagues should avoid commenting on what girls and boys cannot do because of their gender and encourage children to try all the activities offered at the program. You can respond to comments such as "boys can't cook' or "girls can't climb up to the loft" by guiding children to broader views about what boys and girls can do. "Gee, I'm a man and I really like to cook." "Why do you think girls can't climb up to the loft?" Remember, you are a model for the children in the program. If they see you doing a variety of tasks—carrying heavy items, preparing snack, playing football—they will get the message that men and women are not limited by their gender.

Toward the end of this stage, children begin feeling and handling a variety of emotions: anger, jealousy, love, guilt, and competitiveness. They also experience empathy: feeling and acting concerned when another person is upset or hurt and sharing another person's happiness and excitement. Being able to experience and express emotions helps children move beyond their close ties to family and into a world where peer relationships are very important.

Some children hide their feelings from adults. On the surface they may seem calm and happy; however, they may actually be dealing with unexpressed fears and concerns. The school-age program can provide opportunities for children to express their feelings through writing, dramatic play, and art work. Books about feelings help children understand their own emotions and empathize with other people.

"The World is Other Kids" (7 to 9 years)

At this age (7 to 9 years), Greenspan observes, children still enjoy using their imaginations to try out different roles. However, they are more likely to pretend to be a real person—a teacher, an astronaut, a dancer—rather than an imaginary character such as Supergirl. They apply their growing knowledge and academic skills to their play. Children might create a puppet show based on *Charlotte's Web*, write a play about Thomas Jefferson, or paint a picture of an endangered species. They enjoy using prop boxes—a collection of materials focused on a theme—travel agent, television show, auto mechanic.

Children in this age group use their cognitive skills to analyze and negotiate their position within their peer group. Mindy might think, "Lara and Kia sat next to each other on the bus today and now they are playing together. Tomorrow I'll sit with Lara on the bus and then she'll play with me." Such a plan—designed to get Lara to like her—shows how Mindy applies high-level thinking skills to a social situation.

By the time they are eight, many children enjoy forming clubs based on shared interests. They want adults to be facilitators rather than leaders. You can provide suggestions, time, and materials, then step back to let children make and carry out their plans.

At this stage, children may include and exclude others, sometimes based on gender. "This club is for girls. No boys allowed." Some children who are excluded know what to do to make sure they are included. Although adults might cringe at their methods, children often use their negotiation and problem-solving skills to convince their peers to include them. "It's against program rules to keep me out of the Computer Club. Besides, I won't show you how to use the new drawing program if you don't let me join." Others may need some assistance from a sensitive adult, "Rita, I'd really like to learn to use the new drawing program. Will you join our club and show me how to use it?"

A typical characteristic of children this age is their difficulty accepting disappointments and losses. Some children feel a sense of personal loss when losing at Old Maid or checkers and take a long time to recover. This is a normal reaction at this age, not a sign a child is a "poor loser" or a "bad sport." As children's self-esteem grows they are less likely to tie their feelings of self-worth to performance in a game.

Children can be very competitive, accusing each other of cheating or upsetting a board game because the game wasn't going their way. Competition can also affect relationships; children may compete for the attention of a popular child or to spend time with a favorite staff member. When children find the competitive nature of school and sports activities overwhelming you may need to steer them to less-competitive activities. The program should encourage noncompetitive games without winners and losers. You can help children set and pursue individual goals so they can master skills and experience personal achievement.

Seven to nine year olds tend to define themselves in relation to others. They compare their appearance, school performance, physical abilities, and popularity in relation to that of other children. "Casey read a longer book than I did so he must be smarter." "I can't do a handstand, but Alicia can. I must be clumsy." Their self-esteem rises and falls based on the judgments of their friends. Sometimes they make cruel comments that are very painful. As children move into the next stage they continue to be aware of other people's judgments. However, they also base their sense of self on how they feel about themselves.

"The World Inside Me" (10 to 12 years)

Greenspan views children in the third stage (10 to 12 years) as learning to define themselves based on their own goals and values rather than how they are treated by their peers. They gain a sense of who they are that doesn't change with each new criticism or comment. Their interactions with family, friends, teachers, and others help them develop personal values. They begin to see who they are and how they fit in the world. Children in this age group are generally more secure in their feelings about themselves. They can show initiative, are usually cooperative, and appreciate others and their accomplishments.

Most children in this age group have entered or are on the edge of puberty. They are looking forward to growing up, but may also be uncomfortable with the physical changes their bodies are going through. If their bodies are changing at a rate much faster or slower than their peers they are likely to be self-conscious. The school-age program can encourage children to develop their talents and skills so their self-esteem is not tied to how slowly or quickly their bodies are changing.

This is an uneven time for the sexes. Girls may be up to two years ahead of boys in their progress towards physical and social maturity. As they become increasingly interested in the opposite sex they mimic teenage behaviors. Try to accept their harmless imitations and ignore those that can be annoying at times such as using slang or constantly talking about music, clothes, or celebrities.

At this age, children have a strong need to be accepted by their peer group. Even children with good judgment may be influenced by the group to do things they know are not appropriate. Negative peer pressure can lead to drug and alcohol use, early sexual activity, and gang membership. School-age staff are in an excellent position to help children define and stick to their own values even when their friends want them to do something else. You can help children practice how to respond when asked to do something they know is not right—for example, if asked to steal something to prove he or she isn't afraid a child could say, "But I am afraid. Afraid someone will think I'm so stupid I stole something." If you are aware of a child's anti-social behavior, discuss it with parents so children can get the help they need immediately.

This can be a frightening time for children as they become more independent and move into the world. Like toddlers, they may have two desires—to remain close to and dependent on their families as well as to grow up and do things on their own. In response to these confusing feelings, children may become more dependent or may rebel against rules and accepted ways of behaving. Involve them in planning the materials and activities offered by the program. Provide blank schedules so children can plan how to spend their time at the program. If possible, plan activities and set aside an area for this age group only. Try to keep your commands and instructions to a minimum. Instead, use indirect methods to give directions—a sign-up list for chores rather than assignments.

Ten to twelve year olds begin to experience feelings such as sadness and joy in a deeper way, much as adults do. They are aware of and interested in events outside their communities and are developing opinions. They can get fired up discussing topics such as saving the environment and helping the homeless. They can also experience empathy by imagining how they might feel if they lived through an earthquake or what they might do if they won the lottery. Children may talk to you about their feelings and may ask what you might do in similar situations. The program can also arrange for children to participate in community projects such as cleaning up a park or stream or making regular visits to a nursing home. Contact groups that might need volunteers and ask representatives to visit the program.

At this stage, children are beginning to be motivated by personal goals rather than out of desire for approval or fear of what will happen if they don't do what is "right." For example, a child may practice the piano because he or she wants to play well rather than to be praised by the teacher or to avoid being nagged by a parent. They also think about the future—What will the world be like? What will my life be like? Such thoughts can motivate their actions: I want to get a good job when I grow up, so I will do my homework today.

Children with good social skills are more likely to succeed in school and in life.

Success in school is closely related to a child's ability to cooperate, consider another person's perspective, and follow accepted rules and practices. Children are more likely to enjoy youth activities such as athletics and scouts if they are able to be a team member and contribute to group efforts. Their family life will be more rewarding if they can share and take turns with siblings and communicate their ideas and feelings to their parents.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this activity you record examples of the social development of children in your program. Three charts are provided; one for each of the three stages defined by Greenspan: $4^1/_2$ to 7 years, 7 to 9 years, and 10 to 12 years. If you work with only one age group or do not have a full span of ages enrolled, provide examples that apply to your group.

As you complete the charts that follow, keep in mind that many of the examples of children's behavior and staff responses apply to more than one age group. Developmentally appropriate programs are based on a knowledge of child development and are responsive to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Therefore, it is important to observe children regularly, and to use what you learn to individualize the program.

The World is My Oyster: 4½ to 7 Years

Typical Behavior	Example
Fascination with super heroes and heroines.	*Peter pretended to be a monster and chased Cindy and Pam.*
Work and play with other children; express feelings, use creativity and make sense of the world.	
Make up their own games with rules and routines.	
Have special friends.	
Enjoy being with adults.	
Are defining what it means to be a boy or girl.	
Feel and handle a variety of emotions; may hide feelings from adults.	

The World is Other Kids: 7 to 9 Years

Typical Behavior	Example
Pretend to be real people.	*Randi and Emma made up a play about being astronauts.*
Analyze and negotiate their positions within their peer group.	
Form clubs based on shared interests.	
Include and exclude others; may negotiate to be included.	
Have difficulty accepting disappointments and losses.	
Can be very competitive; may find competition overwhelming.	

The World Inside Me: 10 to 12 Years

Typical Behavior	Example
Gain a sense of who they are; develop personal values.	*Jamal told Bernard "I'm not the best guy on the team, but I really like to play."*
Have entered or are on the edge of puberty; may be uncomfortable or self-conscious.	
Mimic teenage behaviors.	
Want to be accepted by peers; can be negatively influenced by peer group.	
Want to be independent, but may sometimes be afraid of growing up.	
Are aware of and interested in community and current events.	
Motivated by personal goals.	

When you have completed as much as you can on these charts, share your answers with your trainer. Discuss what you and your colleagues can do to support children's social development.

Learning Activity II.
Promoting Children's Play

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- observe how children learn and develop through play; and
- provide materials, time, space, and suggestions that allow children to make and carry out their own plans.

The Importance of Play

School-age children come to the program after a full day of "work" at school where most of their activities were planned and controlled by adults. Therefore, it is important for children to spend a good deal of their time at the school-age program engaged in unstructured play. Play is children's work—it helps them grow in all areas. Play gives children opportunities to develop physically, think and solve problems, learn to express themselves in acceptable ways, and build self-esteem. Play is also one of the most important ways in which children develop social skills. They learn to take turns, negotiate, share materials, understand how a friend feels, and express their emotions. In addition, play helps children try out grown-up roles and overcome their fears.

Children's play may include using their imaginations, organizing and leading others, researching special interests, making collections, playing board games, doing puzzles, working on crafts, using physical skills, or listening to music. The school-age program can offer children a change of pace—a place to relax, have fun, use their creativity, make their own decisions, practice and master skills, do things with other children, and do things by themselves.

Before continuing your reading spend a few minutes walking around to see what the children in your program are doing. Write down some examples of their play. An example is provided to get you started.

Example: *Jaron and Ian are feeding Scampy, the program's gerbil. Jaron holds Scampy while Ian offers her a piece of food. Jaron lets Scampy crawl up his arm and behind his ear. He laughs when she tickles his ear. Ian asks for a turn.*

Sara Smilansky identifies four kinds of play enjoyed by school-age children.[2] **Functional play** occurs when children explore and examine the properties of objects and materials and find out how things "work." By handling, experimenting, observing, listening, and smelling, children make discoveries. Doing science experiments, making designs with parquetry blocks, and baking bread are examples of functional play that might take place in your program.

Functional play allows children to make discoveries.

Through **constructive play**, children use materials—for example, blocks, modeling materials, recycled items, sand—to create a representation of something real or imagined. For example, children might create a farm with Legos, make a collage depicting life in space, or build roads in the sandbox.

Constructive play involves making representations of real or imagined things.

Games with rules include board games, many computer games, sports, or any type of play governed by a set of rules that everyone understands and follows. Depending on a child's temperament, he or she may enjoy playing board games with one or more peers. Some children just enjoy the game; others are driven to win. They may fight over the rules and they may have difficulty accepting when they lose. Playing games with rules provides opportunities for children to deal with competition and the strong feelings generated by winning or losing. You can help children work through their disagreements and handle feelings of anger and aggression. You can also introduce some games that do not result in winners or losers. Some children enjoy competing with themselves to better their previous scores or records. Interested children can make charts to keep track of their own progress.

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[2] Based on Sara Smilansky and Leah Shefatya, *Facilitating Play: A Medium for Promoting Cognitive, Socio-Emotional, and Academic Development in Young Children* (Gaithersburg, MD: Psychosocial and Educational Publications, 1990).

School-age children enjoy socio-dramatic play focused on fantasy or the real world.

During the school-age years, children engage in **socio-dramatic** play at a level that is more complex than when they were younger. Their make-believe play may revolve around fantasy or focus on themes from the real world (past or present). Play episodes can extend over several days or weeks. This type of play is most closely related to social development. It is an important way for children to learn how to get along with their peers. When playing with each other, children share information, offer suggestions, and sometimes tell each other how to behave. Children who are naturally shy may find it is easier to be a part of a group when they can pretend to be someone else. The social skills developed through socio-dramatic play are used in almost all the other situations children encounter. For example, learning to follow the rules established by the group will help a child learn to play games and sports that involve rules.

Many school-age children enjoy planning and putting on their own plays and shows. You can provide writing materials for budding playwrights and books of creative drama activities and short plays. Children will make good use of props and dress-up clothes such as the following:

Shoes
Handbags
Sweaters
Dresses
Skirts
Aprons
Raincoats
Jewelry
Sunglasses
Watches
Hats
Shirts
Pants
Neckties
Umbrellas
Graduation Gowns
Boots
Coats
Capes
Belts and suspenders
Scarves
Fake fur pieces
Eyeglass frames
Brief cases

Older school-age children may involve younger ones in their productions, or they may put together a show, then perform it for the rest of the group. Writing a script, providing background music, and creating elaborate costumes can all be part of their play. Such projects may last from an afternoon to several weeks.

Create a variety of prop boxes to encourage children's socio-dramatic play.

One way to support children's socio-dramatic play is to create prop boxes—containers filled with materials related to a specific theme or type of play. Prop boxes can be used both indoors and outdoors. They are ideal for programs that operate in shared space because they are easy to set up and store. Young school-age children, who are still tied to home, enjoy prop boxes that allow them to explore family roles. Prop boxes for older children might be related to a shared experience, such as a behind-the-scenes tour of a supermarket. The box might include uniforms, empty food containers, a cash register, shopping baskets, and important that has happened in a child's life—dancing a role in *The Nutcracker Suite*.

Children will have ideas for prop box themes and can help collect the materials. Include related books (fiction and nonfiction) and pictures so children can fully explore their interests. Ask them to let you know when consumables such as pads of paper need to be replaced. Any sturdy container, perhaps decorated by the children, will do for storage of the props. Introduce new boxes to the group, then store them where children can have easy access.

Offer a variety of prop boxes so you can address a wide range of interests. Keep them out as long as children are interested. Some suggested themes and materials for prop boxes appear at the end of this activity.

How school-age staff support play depends on what children ask for.

School-age staff play an important role in supporting children's play by providing time, space, materials, and encouragement. The youngest children in the group may invite you to participate in their games and dramatic play. You can model how to be a graceful loser (or winner), review the rules at key moments in the game, introduce non-competitive versions of popular games, and ask open-ended questions to help children recreate experiences, "What are some of the things you usually do at the beach? What would you need to open an ice cream stand?"

Most older children prefer to make and carry out their own plans without a lot of adult involvement. Allowing children to be independent tells children that you feel confident they can do many things on their own. You don't have to completely ignore them. Instead, observe to see how things are going, encourage them to ask for what they need, and offer suggestions in a way that allows children to accept or reject them. "If you want to make curtains for your puppet theater, there's some fabric in the storage cabinet."

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you can use a checklist to assess how your program supports children's play. After completing the assessment, review the results and plan ways to improve the program environment and encourage children's play.

Supporting Children's Play: Checklist

Program Environment

1. The schedule includes long blocks of time when children can make and carry out their plans. ☐
2. Materials (e.g., radios to take apart, cooking ingredients and equipment, pegs and pegboards) are available for functional play. ☐
3. Materials (e.g., blocks, art and craft supplies, Legos, recycled items) are available for constructive play. ☐
4. Materials (e.g., board games, computer games, balls and sports equipment) are available to play games with rules. ☐
5. Materials (e.g., props, costumes, books of plays) are available for socio-dramatic play. ☐
6. There is space for children to store long term projects. ☐
7. The space can be arranged if necessary to make room for children's play. ☐
8. The program can provide additional materials in response to children's requests. ☐

Encouraging Children's Play

1. I join in younger children's games upon request. ☐
2. I help children learn the rules for games and sports. ☐
3. I help children handle feelings generated by wins and losses. ☐
4. I introduce non-competitive games. ☐
5. I give children the freedom to play on their own without adult involvement. ☐
6. I encourage children to ask for what they need to support their play: time, space, and materials. ☐
7. I offer suggestions in a way that allows children to choose whether to adopt them. ☐
8. I encourage children to carry out their own plans. ☐
9. I let children make their own mistakes and learn from them. ☐
10. I use information from observing children's play in planning. ☐

Review your responses to this checklist. List below any changes you'd like to make to improve the ways you and your program encourage play.

Discuss your ideas with your trainer and colleagues. Plan any changes you can make to more effectively encourage chidren's play.

Prop Boxes for School-Age Children[3]

Health Clinic

- Gauze
- Cotton balls
- Height-weight chart
- Prescription pads
- Disposable tongue depressors
- Small suitcase or bag for medical supplies
- Real stethoscope
- Plastic eye droppers
- Dolls
- Scale
- Red finger paint for blood
- Books on first aid and preventive health care
- Band-Aids
- Play thermometer
- Paper and pencils
- Stretcher or cot
- Cloth for making bandages
- Beds
- Stop watch
- Telephone
- Hospital gown
- Health provider uniforms

Veterinarian

- Stuffed animals
- Items from health clinic list above
- Pet carrying boxes
- Books on pet care and animal behavior
- Collars and leashes
- Pet toys
- Food dishes

Unisex Hair Stylist

- Large mirror
- Rollers or curlers
- Bobby pins
- Manicure set
- Paper
- Hair dryer and curling iron without cords
- Aprons, large bibs, or smocks
- Hand mirrors
- Hair nets
- Hair clips
- Emery boards
- Pencil
- Hair care products (empty containers)
- Razors (toys or real ones without blades)
- Hairpins
- Plastic basin
- Barrettes and ribbons
- Magazines
- Shaving brushes
- Hairbrushes and combs (wash after use)
- Towels
- Scarves
- Headbands
- Play money
- Shaving cream
- Wigs mounted on wig stands

School

- Books
- Pencil sharpener
- Attendance book
- Chalk
- Paper pads
- Red pencil
- Small blackboard
- Rulers
- Stickers
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Stamp and pad

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[3] Adapted with permission from Cheryl Foster, "Dramatic Play Kits or Prop Boxes," in *Competency-Based Training Module No. 24: Dramatic Play* (Suppl. No. 5) (Coolidge, AZ: CDA Training Program, Institute of Human Development, Central Arizona College, 1982), pp. 41-46.

Office

- Pencils
- Paper and pads
- Phone books
- Assorted junk mail
- Typewriter or keyboard (from recycling center)
- Pencil holder
- Rubber stamps
- Briefcases
- Adding machine
- Discarded business forms of many types
- Pencil sharpener
- Ink pads
- Portfolios
- Files
- Portable file box to hold the props
- Waste basket
- Telephones
- Clip boards
- Paper clips
- Scissors
- Staples

Live Movies, TV, or Stage Production

- Puppets
- Supplies for making new puppets
- Paper money
- Large carton with "window" and painted knobs
- Empty popcorn boxes
- Colored paper for tickets or roll of expired movie tickets
- Paper pads and pencils
- Use with dress-up box to create costumes for dancers and actors

Beach

- Sunglasses
- Umbrellas
- Playing cards
- Buckets and shovels
- Blankets or beach towels
- Books about beach plants and animals
- Sun hats
- Picnic basket
- Swim goggles
- Sand molds
- Empty suntan lotion bottles
- Beach bags
- Fishing poles
- Inflatable tubes
- Frisbees
- Paper plates and cups and plastic utensils
- Sea shells
- Portable radio
- Flippers
- Plastic thongs
- Food (pictures or empty cans or boxes)

Gas Station and Automobile Repair

- Work shirts
- Pliers
- Flashlights
- Key ring and keys
- Motor parts (used and washed spark plugs, filters, cable sets, carburetors, gears)
- Caps
- Screwdrivers
- Wiring
- Rags
- Auto supply catalogs
- Tire pump
- Oil funnel
- Air pump
- Work gloves
- Large and small boxes to make cars and/or miniature vehicles
- Hammers
- Empty oil cans
- Windshield wipers
- Short lengths of hose
- Miniature tool set for use on miniature cars

Learning Activity III.

Promoting Children's Emotional Development[4]

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the emotional milestones children need to master during the school-age years; and
- support children's emotional development.

The Foundations for Emotional Development

Dr. Stanley Greenspan has defined several early milestones that are the foundation for children's ongoing emotional development. Addressing these milestones begins in early childhood; however, they are more fully developed during the school-age years. Children who do not master these milestones may have problems—in school, at home, and in their relationships with peers. Greenspan's five milestones are described below.

"Security and the ability to look, listen, and be calm."

This milestone allows children to focus on work and activities. Most children begin learning this skill during the first few months of life. They enjoy being with their parents and caregivers; develop a regular schedule for sleeping; look and listen to their environment; and in general, feel comfortable with life. School-age children who have accomplished this milestone can sit and listen to instructions without looking around the room or thinking about something happening outside the window. Children who have not reached this milestone have difficulty focusing on their work or activities because they are distracted by what is going on around them. They may have difficulty selecting what they want to do—the numerous options may seem overwhelming.

"Relating: the ability to feel warm and close to others."

The second milestone allows children to enjoy being with others. It is based on the trust that normally develops during infancy as a child interacts with and depends on parents and other caregivers. In the early years most of children's learning comes from their relationships with others. Mastering the ability to relate to individuals as well as a group is important to learning. For example, infants begin to understand cause and effect when they learn crying will bring someone to their side or that smiling will get a smile in return. The emotional experiences resulting from warm and close relationships help children understand more abstract concepts later in life.

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[4] Based with permission on Dr. Stanley Greenspan, *Playground Politics, Understanding the Emotional Life of Your School-Age Child* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1993).

A school-age child who feels warm and close to others can work independently and easily join a group at play. Children who aren't able to develop warm, trusting relationships are likely to have difficulty making friends and becoming part of the group. They may be wary of others, use aggression to get what they want, or play and work alone because they fear rejection.

"International two-way communication without words."

The third milestone allows children to understand and respond appropriately to nonverbal cues. Children need to be able to pay attention and feel close to others before they can communicate with them. This milestone begins when infants learn that facial expressions and body language are signs of thoughts and feelings. Infants use this information to decide how they will respond. Thus, a child responds to a parent's frown by crying, or wiggles with delight in response to a parent's open arms. Children also use nonverbal communication to express what they want or need—for example, a child may point to an object on the table so her older brother will get it for her.

School-age children who have mastered this milestone can observe nonverbal cues and accurately "read" the expectations, desires, and feelings of other people—for example, teachers, school-age staff, and peers. Children who have not mastered this milestone may misinterpret the actions of their peers and have trouble being accepted by the group. For example:

> Chaundra and Deanne are working on collages in the arts and crafts area. Deanne gets up to join a group of children making up a dance. Chaundra doesn't understand why Deanne left. She thinks Deanne doesn't like her. Actually, Deanne has been watching the other children for some time. She was waiting to see what kind of dancing they would be doing. Chaundra did not notice Deanne's quick glances at the dancers, sighs of boredom with her collage, and tapping the table in time to the music. Because Chaundra feels rejected, she calls after Deanne, "You can't leave. You didn't pick up your stuff." The other children turn to look at Chaundra. They want Deanne to join them so they take her side, "She already picked up." "That's your mess." Now Chaundra feels doubly rejected—by Deanne and by the dancers. She has no idea what went wrong.

"Emotional ideas."

This milestone allows children to use words to express their feelings. With this ability they can create mental pictures of what they want, need, or feel. When something happens that makes them feel angry they can give this feeling a name, rather than responding with tears, a tantrum, or pouting. The child who feels angry says to herself, "I am angry." Children who have mastered this skill can use it in dramatic play and in creative writing. They can imagine how a character might feel in a situation; then they assume that role or write about it.

Children who have not mastered emotional ideas may have trouble controlling their actions. They can't describe their feelings to themselves and don't know how to use words to express the ideas their feelings represent. They tend to act without thinking because they don't know they can have a feeling without an action. A person can feel sad without crying, angry without hitting, or frustrated without tearing up a picture. Instead of using words to express their feelings, they respond by hitting another child, throwing a bat, or crying. For example:

> Neil and Brianna are watering the garden with a hose. When Quentin walks by, Neil turns towards him, aims the hose, and says playfully, "Would you like us to water you, too?" Some water drips on Quentin's sneakers. Quentin grabs the hose from Neil and pushes him out of the way. Neil falls down in the garden as Quentin says, "You are so stupid." Quentin didn't notice the playful tone in Neil's voice. He didn't know how to express his feelings—anger at having water drip on his sneakers—so he pushed Neil and called him "stupid."

"Emotional thinking."

The fifth milestone enables children to understand the consequences of their actions. It involves the ability to link different kinds of ideas and feelings in order to understand how one relates to another. For example, a child might think, "I am angry because Terrence wouldn't play with me." This cause-and-effect thinking is also used in reading comprehension and understanding of arithmetic concepts.

An important part of emotional thinking is understanding that there are consequences to actions. Being able to consider consequences allows children to think about the future. They know what they do today will affect what happens tomorrow, and perhaps what happens into the future. This helps children learn to handle frustration, set aside immediate gratification for future rewards, and work hard at difficult tasks.

Children who can't use emotional thinking may have difficulty controlling their behavior or making future plans. They don't see how what they do today affects the future. For example:

> Francie spent the whole afternoon on the computer, even though Yancey repeatedly asked for a turn. The next day Yancey gets to the computer first. When Francie asks for a turn, he says, "No way. Yesterday you had enough turns for a week." Francie asks Ms. Dodd to intervene. "Yancey won't let me have a turn on the computer." Yancey tells his side to Ms. Dodd, who is sympathetic. She takes Francie aside and tries to explain why Yancey won't share the computer. Francie responds, "It's not fair. I want my turn."

How School-Age Staff Can Support Emotional Development

Although children develop in similar ways, each child is a unique individual. The child's physical characteristics, temperament, family, culture, sense of self, values, and experiences all play a part in learning to communicate, to get along with others, and become a productive member of society. To support emotional development, it's important to get to know each child in the group, spend one-on-one time, and participate in activities—rather than just planning and leading them. Greenspan recommends five techniques that help children master the emotional milestones described above. You probably already use many of them.

"Floor time" lets you and a child talk about whatever the child wants to discuss or do whatever the child wants to do. The child takes the lead, while you follow. Floor time allows a child to communicate, interact, and relate to another person. In a school-age program this might take place as you and a child do a puzzle together, play catch, or sit on the couch. Here is an example of floor time. Add an example from your own experiences in the blank space.

> As seven-year-old John throws the ball to Mr. Vigersky he says, "I messed up on my spelling test. I cried and some of my friends laughed at me. Do you ever cry?" Mr. Vigersky responds, "Yes. I cry sometimes if I'm sad or very disappointed. You must care a lot about your school work."

“Problem-solving time”* allows a child and staff member to work together to discuss and come up with possible solutions to specific difficulties. You might bring up an incident you observed, or raise a problem behavior that needs to be addressed. The goal is to help the child understand his or her behavior and interactions with others. This understanding helps the child anticipate and prevent problems in the future. Here is an example of problem-solving time. Add an example from your own experiences in the blank space.

> Ms. Jackson says to Amy, “Today I heard you swearing at me behind my back after I told you it was time to go in. Let's talk face to face about why you were angry and how you can express your feelings appropriately.”

“Identifying and empathizing with a child's point of view” helps you understand the reasons for a child's behavior. You can then accept that the reasons make sense or help the child change his or her inappropriate behavior. Here is an example of identifying and empathizing with a child's point of view. Add an example from your own experiences in the blank space.

> Rashid explains to Ms. Barnes why he took the basketball away from another child. “Jordan doesn't need the ball because he's the best basketball player on our team. He doesn't need to practice any more. I do.” Ms. Barnes says, “Rashid, I think you want to practice so you can score more baskets. You think Jordan is so good he doesn't need to practice. If the two of you play a game of one-on-one together, you can both practice.”

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*Helping children learn to solve problems is also covered in Module 10, Guidance.

"Breaking the challenge into small pieces" lets a child experience success. Completing one step successfully encourages the child to continue working on a difficult task. Being able to face a challenge one step at a time is a skill children can use in school, to write a research report; in a community activity, learning to skate; or at home, cleaning a messy room. Here is an example of a staff member helping a child break a challenge into small pieces. Add an example from your own experiences in the blank space.

> Ms. Hemming says to Catherine, "Learning to play tennis takes time. Perhaps you could begin by learning a basic skill—serving, forehand, or backhand. I can show you how to hold your racket and hit the ball. Then you can practice with me or a friend or hit the ball against the backboard."

"Setting limits" helps children feel safe. Limits tell children what behavior is acceptable and what the consequences are for unacceptable behavior. Limits must match the child's developmental stage. Here is an example of a staff member setting limits. Add an example from your own experiences in the blank space.

> Mr. Penn says to Yanni and Jessica, "I'm sorry to interrupt your drawing, but you left your board game out on the table. You need to put the pieces back in the box and return the game to the shelf. You can come back to your drawing after you put the game away."

The techniques just described are most helpful when used in your daily interactions with children, rather than at special times. They are part of the many appropriate practices you use in your work that help you get to know and understand what makes each child a unique individual. Knowing about each child helps you support his or her social and emotional growth.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you keep a journal for five days, noting the times you use the techniques recommended by Greenspan for promoting children's emotional development. You record what happened and how the children responded. Include examples from each of the age groups defined by Greenspan (4½ to 7 years, 7 to 9 years, and 10 to 12 years). If you work with only one age group, try to include examples from as wide an age range as possible. Begin by reading the example that follows.

Promoting Emotional Development
(Example)

Dates: *December 4–8*

What Happened	How the Child Responded
I spent "floor time" with Seth (8 years). I listened to his story about a girl at school who keeps chasing him at recess. He wants her to stop, but he doesn't know how to tell her.	*Seth spent five minutes describing the girl who is chasing him. He was very concerned, but seemed relieved to be able to talk about the situation.*
I observed Loren (10 years) watching Lisa (11 years) teach Rachel (12 years) a new dance. Lisa and Rachel were laughing and having a great time. Loren watched for a while then said, "You two look really stupid. You sure are uncoordinated." I tried to empathize with Loren's point of view to learn why she might have made her comment. I think she wanted to join Lisa and Rachel but didn't know how. I asked Lisa and Rachel if they would teach me the dance, then I asked Loren to join us.	*At first Loren said she didn't want to dance. After a few minutes I asked again. I said I needed lots of help to learn the steps. She shrugged her shoulders and joined us. I stayed for a while, then left the three girls dancing together.*
Maria (6 years) seemed to be having a hard time finding something to do. We talked about her problem and the different things she might do. Some appealed to her and some didn't. I asked whether she wanted to be inside or outside.	*Maria decided to play in the sandbox outside because her friend Lisa (5 years) was already out there.*

Promoting Emotional Development

Dates: ____________________

What You Did or Said	How the Child Responded

Discuss your journal entries with your trainer and your colleagues. Plan ways to continue encouraging children's emotional development.

Make additional copies of this form if you need them.

Learning Activity IV.
Helping Children Relate Positively to Others

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- tell when a child needs your help to make friends; and
- help individual children develop friendship-making skills.

Every child needs a friend.

Every child needs to have at least one friend to talk to; play, argue and make up with; and care for. Some children develop and use their social skills with ease. They are naturally outgoing and seem to know instinctively how to make friends and find a place in their peer group. They get a lot of pleasure from being with their friends. Other children may take longer to make friends, but once they feel comfortable, they join in activities and enjoy being with others.

There are children who find it very difficult to make friends. They frequently feel rejected. Such children often have low self-esteem and feel unloved. They may not have mastered Greenspan's emotional milestones as discussed in Learning Activity III. Because they aren't accepted by their peers, they have fewer chances to develop social skills. They cannot break the cycle of rejection. These children need adult assistance to learn how to make friends.

Most children who have trouble making friends fall into one of three categories. (These are very broad categories and should not be used to label children.) They are: shy or withdrawn, overly aggressive, or rejected by their peers. If you have a child in your program who has difficulty making friends, you can make a big difference in that child's life by helping him or her to break the cycle of rejection. Being able to make and keep friends is a skill children will use throughout their lives.

Helping Shy or Withdrawn Children Make Friends

You are likely to have one or two children in your program who appear to be very shy or withdrawn. Before offering assistance, it is important to observe to see if the child is simply moving at a slower pace than others in the group. Some children prefer doing a solitary activity—for example, painting at the easel—before they are ready to join a group activity—for example, making a mural. Some need to sit back and observe other children to learn how to become part of the group. They may begin by joining in an activity with one or two children. Then, after becoming more at ease, they can participate in a large group activity.

There are some children, however, who are so shy or withdrawn they need you to step in. Your assistance will be most helpful if it is offered indirectly, without making it obvious to anyone else that assistance is being offered. If Mary and Billy are very shy, then saying things to the other children such as "be nice to Billy" or "can you let Mary play too?" are not helpful. These tend to make the two shy children feel self-conscious or embarrassed. The other children may go along with the suggestions for a time, but Billy and Mary will not develop the social skills they need to cope by themselves.

Try these suggestions.

The following are some suggestions for helping shy or withdrawn children make friends.[5]

Observe, observe, observe. Watch what the child does and says, who the child talks to, and who the child watches. When playing a game of solitaire, is the child fully engaged or also watching a group of children playing Sorry? Observe to find out what the child likes to do, where his or her favorite places are, whether the child behaves differently outside, and what skills and interests the child has.

Establish a connection with the child. Talk about what the child is observing. "It looks like they're having fun with the hula hoops." If the child responds, you can continue the conversation. "Do you think you could keep one twirling that long? There are some more hoops in the storage shed. Would you like to get one for yourself?" You might also comment on what the child is doing. "I've noticed how much you enjoy using the Legos." Such comments convey that you are paying attention to the child.

Encourage the child to express his or her ideas and feelings. Notice when a child is particularly engaged in an activity and try to build on this interest. "Leila, you know just how to handle our guinea pigs. How do you know so much about them?"

Use what you know about the child's interests to create special situations. For example, if you know Jeff really likes to cook, suggest he help you organize a Cooking Club that will involve several children working together. Ask Jeff to help you plan the club and suggest specific assignments for him to carry out to keep him involved.

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[5] Adapted with permission from Dennie Palmer Wolf, ed., *Connecting: Friendship in the Lives of Young Children and Their Teachers* (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, Inc., 1986), pp. 58-62.

Help children find good friends. Just as there may be several shy or withdrawn children in your program, there also may be several who are socially competent and sensitive. Try asking one of these children and a "shy" child to help you do a task. "Dean, could you please help Tommy and me carry the equipment outside?" Or let both children know about an activity you know both would enjoy. "Dean and Tommy, I know you both like woodworking. We have a new supply of wood and some new hand drills."

Help the child understand his or her feelings. "It's perfectly normal to want to spend time alone when you don't know the other children too well. After a while you'll feel more comfortable and be ready to join in the group activities."

Helping Overly Aggressive Children Make Friends

In any group of children there may be a few who are not able to control their behaviors. One reason may be that they are not able to give words to their feelings. (Greenspan's "emotional ideas" milestone). These children might use aggression as a means to express their unhappiness or to get their own way. They may not know how to take turns, negotiate, or cooperate with others. They don't understand how to meet their own needs within the context of the group. Other children may not include them in their activities because they are afraid of their aggressive outbursts.

Staff also may have trouble relating to children whose behavior is overly aggressive. It's natural to want to avoid a child who frequently hurts others or uses force. But because school-age staff are professionals, they must learn to overcome their negative feelings about an aggressive child. It may help to remember that the children who hit or bully other children may be troubled or in pain, emotionally. They may feel unhappy or insecure, and they need help to learn positive ways of relating to other children. These children must feel safe and cared for before they can develop self-esteem and the social skills to make friends and play with other children.

Try these suggestions.

The following are some techniques for helping children who behave aggressively to find new ways of relating to others.

Help the child understand the consequences of his or her actions. "I think you want to play Uno with Crystal and Susan. But when you refuse to follow the rules it makes them angry. Then they don't want to play with you."

Help a child gain control over his or her negative feelings. "Shawn, I know you are frustrated because you didn't get a hit, but you may not throw the bat. Try taking several deep breaths. That will help you to calm down before it's your turn at bat again."

Spend five or ten minutes alone with the child ("floor time"). Wait until the child is no longer exhibiting aggressive behavior. "David, let's play cards. Will you teach me how to play the new game the other kids are playing?"

Use the child's positive characteristics and interests to help him or her be accepted by the group. "Blake, you collected some beautiful leaves. Can we put them on the table in the science area where everyone can see them?"

Set limits. At times, overly aggressive children are frightened by their own inability to control their behavior. Setting and adhering to clear limits helps them feel secure at the program, and feeling secure helps them be ready to learn more appropriate behaviors.

Helping Rejected Children Make Friends

Some children are regularly rejected by their peers. These children, who may be loud, clumsy, or bossy, do not know how to get involved with other children. For example, while working on a puzzle, Mark tells the other children, "I'll do the edges. Barbara you do the sky and Brett will do the trees." The other children resent being told what to do and drift to other activities, leaving Mark to do the puzzle by himself. Children who are frequently rejected are often unaware of the effects of their behavior on others. They seem to want to play with others, but don't know how to get involved. You may hear a lot of complaints about these children. "She's always butting in." "He talks too loud." "She thinks she's in charge of us."

Many of the techniques for helping shy or aggressive children are also effective for helping a child who is rejected. Often these children are highly intelligent and have some social skills but may not know how to use them. Some find it easier to interact with adults than their peers and tend to spend more time with the staff than with other children. Even if the staff find such children engaging, it is crucial for them to develop the ability to be a part of their own peer group. Observe these children to find out who in the group does accept them. Then find ways to include them in group projects.

Try these suggestions.

The following are some suggestions for helping children who are often rejected to make friends.[6]

Teach the child how to ask questions to find out what a group of children are doing before joining in. "What are you playing?" "Who are you pretending to be?" "What are you making?"

Encourage the child to discuss his or her feelings about being rejected. "You look sad, Cynthia. Can you tell me what happened?" Telling what happened may help the child understand why she was rejected by the others.

Coach the child on how to follow accepted social practices. For example, if Felipe takes too long deciding what he wants for snack (which annoys the other children), Ms. Jenssen could say, "Felipe, step out of line while you are deciding what you want to eat. The children will let you back in line once you have decided. That way the others can get their snack."

Help the child figure out a way to be included in activities. For example, Mr. Donovan notices Cassie trying to join the soccer game. The other children say, "We've already started. It's too late." As a disappointed Cassie walks away, Mr. Donovan suggests, "The blue team has fewer people than the red one. You could offer to join the blue team." Cassie returns to the field and says, "I can play on the blue team to make the teams more even. Okay?"

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you will think of a child in your program who needs help learning to make friends. Observe this child for five minutes at several different times of the day. Review your notes and summarize your thoughts about the child. Use this new information and the suggestions in this learning activity to plan ways to help the child develop friendships. Implement your plan over the next week and record what happens. Begin by reading the example that follows.

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[6] Adapted with permission from Dwight L. Rogers and Dorene Doerre Ross, "Encouraging Positive Social Interaction Among Young Children," *Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, March 1986), pp. 15-16.

Helping Individual Children Develop Friendships

(Example)

Child: *Alexa* **Age:** *9 years* **Dates:** *April 15-17*

Observation Notes	Summary
Time: *3:20 p.m.* *Alexa gets snack. Looks around room. Sits at end of table. Charmaine and Donna at other end, talking, laughing. Alexa looks up, watches for few minutes. Charmaine looks up, smiles at Alexa. Alexa finishes snack, cleans up, goes to reading area.*	*Alexa seems to be interested in Charmaine and Donna, but she didn't smile back. Perhaps she didn't notice.*
Time: *7:20 a.m.* *Alexa walks through door. Hangs up coat, puts bag in cubby. Looks around room. Walks to bean bag chair. Sits down. Watches Donna and Trent playing checkers. Says, "Can I play the winner?" Donna laughs, "That will be me!"*	*Alexa seems to be reaching out. She took a chance by asking to play the winner of the checkers game.*
Time: *3:40 p.m.* *Alexa and others in group meeting. Mr. Lawrence describes afternoon activities. Says there will be a softball game. Alexa smiles. Donna stands up, pretends to throw the ball. Alexa laughs.*	*Alexa seems to want to play softball. She also seems to enjoy Donna's playfulness.*

Plan:

I will continue observing Alexa to find out what she likes to do and talk to her about her special interests. I will also talk with other staff members to learn more about Alexa.

I will plan an activity of interest to both Alexa and Donna and try to get both girls involved.

I will try to involve both Alexa and Donna in completing a task.

Results (after one week):

I learned a lot about Alexa. Although she is a quiet child she enjoys sports and has strong physical skills. She also enjoys creative activities—she spends a lot of time in the arts and crafts area.

I planned a softball clinic and both Alexa and Donna volunteered to help teach the younger children some basic skills. They seemed to enjoy each other.

I asked Alexa and Donna to take inventory in the arts and crafts area and list the supplies we need. They spent most of the afternoon doing their job and getting to know each other.

Helping Individual Children Develop Friendships

Child: ______________ **Age:** ______________ **Dates:** ______________

Observation Notes	**Summary**
Time: ___________	
Time: ___________	

Make additional copies of this form if you need them.

Review your observation notes and summaries as well as the suggestions you have read. Develop a plan for helping this child. Implement your plan over the next week and then record the results.

Plan:

Results (after one week):

Talk to your trainer about how you helped this child develop friendships.

Learning Activity V.
Building a Sense of Community

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- create a sense of community in the school-age program;
- hold group meetings that allow children to use their social skills; and
- provide opportunities for children to be involved in the community at large.

The school-age program is a community.

The school-age program is a community unto itself, with children and staff as its members. Ideally it is a positive social environment in which all children feel they belong and know that their contributions are valued and respected. Such a community allows children to develop the social skills they will need to succeed in life.

By the time they reach the school-age years, most children have a wide range of social skills. They know how to share, take turns, empathize, compromise, cooperate, and express feelings using words. These skills are further developed during the school-age years. In addition, children are ready to learn more sophisticated social skills such as accepting different points of view, listening when others are speaking, respecting another person's personal space and belongings, working as a member of a team, and using conflict resolution techniques to solve problems and resolve disagreements. Children will use these and other social skills throughout their lives—in school, on the job, in their communities, and as they create families of their own. As they participate in the program each day, staff can provide many opportunities for children to develop and use social skills as members of a community.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some ways you can build a sense of community in your program.

Invite children to participate in program planning. They can help form new clubs, select new materials and games, suggest places to go for field trips, and assess which activities and interest areas are working and which ones need to be changed. (See Module 11, Program Management for more information on involving children in planning.)

Include some materials and activities that are enjoyed by children of different ages. Multi-age activities encourage older and younger children to get to know and appreciate each other. Older children can practice leadership skills and feel good about being able to pass on their skills and knowledge. Younger children can get new ideas from the older ones and just enjoy receiving attention from someone older.

Offer some materials and activities that require specific skills and abilities. This practice demonstrates respect for children's individual interests and abilities. For example, a high level of skills are needed for some team sports, crafts, or science experiments. Conversely, offer some materials and activities that address the needs of children with skills that are less developed.

Encourage children to form clubs to explore their special interests. Clubs are an excellent way for children to use leadership and other social skills. After helping the club get off the ground, step back and encourage the children to take over the club's activities. Let the children know you are available to offer materials and other assistance, if needed. Respect their ability to do things for themselves.

Include children in discussing and developing program rules and consequences. Children are more likely to follow rules when they are involved in creating them and understand why the rules are needed. It's also important to respond when children complain that rules are too restrictive. Children gain new skills and abilities over time, and rules that once were important may no longer be needed. (See Module 10, Guidance, for more information on how to involve children in setting rules and limits.)

Identify real jobs children can do to help the program run smoothly. Involve children in identifying what jobs are needed. You can suggest some of your own such as cleaning the rabbit's cage or surveying children to find out what books they would like to have on hand.

Establish a buddy system to help new children adjust to the program. "Buddies" can give a tour of the program, explain the schedule and routines, and participate in activities with the newcomer for a few days.

Model social skills as you interact with colleagues and children. Use the language and actions you would like children to use. For example:

- use polite words such as please, thank you, and excuse me;
- ask for permission before interrupting a child;
- step in when a colleague needs assistance—"I'll wipe up the spilled juice while you get some more from the refrigerator."

Group Meetings

Group meetings are times to share, provide information everyone needs to hear, sing songs, review the schedule, discuss and solve problems, and plan activities. One great advantage of holding meetings is that they build a sense of community. How often you hold them depends on group size, program format, and whether children enjoy participating. In smaller programs, all children and staff meet together; in larger programs, different age groups (or multi-age groups) may meet separately so all children can have a chance to express their ideas. It's probably best not to hold meetings as soon as children arrive at the program. Most children need some time to talk with their friends, burn off energy, and have a snack. If holding meetings every day becomes chaotic, plan them biweekly or weekly and try shortening the time.

Many children enjoy and gain security from predictable events so it is a good idea to follow the same routine for each meeting. Rituals such as singing the same song at every meeting give children a sense of belonging. The school-age program feels like a familiar place. Some older children may balk and find the rituals "stupid." Others will be upset if the routine is changed because it is a source of comfort, even if it is "stupid."

Group meetings are excellent opportunities for staff and children to use their social skills. Remaining quiet while someone else is speaking, taking turns expressing an opinion, listening without interrupting, and compromising so the group can reach consensus are all skills used during group meetings.

It is important to establish and review the ground rules for group meetings.

At the beginning of the program year and periodically as needed, it is critical to set and review the ground rules for group participation. These guidelines, developed with the children, might include items such as the following:

- Try to meet at the same time and make sure meetings are short—for example, the first and third Mondays of the month from 3:30-4:00 p.m. Keep to this schedule unless the group wants to continue a discussion past the usual ending time.
- Sit in a circle so everyone can see one another. (This encourages children to speak to each other, not just to the leader.)
- Raise your hand if you want to speak. The group leader—either a child or a staff member—will recognize you.
- Remain quiet when someone is speaking. Pay attention and listen closely to what they have to say.
- Accept all ideas and suggestions. There are no right or wrong ideas or suggestions.
- Allow people to pass if they don't want to speak.

- If someone needs to leave the meeting, they should do so without disrupting the others.

Children can practice leadership skills in group meetings.

You can encourage children to lead and be actively involved in group meetings. For example, when a child has a specific concern he or she can raise it with the group and ask for their suggestions for solving it. Some children find it very easy to speak to the group and may tend to dominate the discussions. Others find it uncomfortable to share their ideas in a large-group setting. Such children may find it easier to write down their ideas, which you can then read aloud, or they may be willing to speak up in a smaller group. With practice and continued participation, children's reluctance to speak up may decrease over time.

Encouraging Involvement in the Larger Community

An important accomplishment for school-age children is learning that they belong to many different communities. Younger school-age children begin to see themselves as members of their local community. As they get older, children use community resources, take part in activities such as scouts and athletics, and contribute to projects such as neighborhood clean-ups or food drives. The oldest children in your program, 11- and 12-year-olds, are likely to be aware of national and world affairs. Some older children read newspapers and magazines and watch the news. They are becoming increasingly aware of current events and want to be involved in their world.

The school-age program can encourage children's involvement in the larger community in a number of ways. Field trips to museums, parks, and libraries help them get to know their community. Many businesses and government agencies offer behind-the-scenes tours of their facilities. Children can see first-hand the steps involved in bottling soda, writing and publishing a daily newspaper, or disposing of garbage. Such trips help children understand "how things work" and introduce them to potential future careers.

Inviting community members to visit the program is another way to expose children to careers and spark their interests in the larger community. Guest presenters might include a health professional, an aerobics instructor, a firefighter, and a veterinarian. Apprenticeships where children spend time with a mentor who introduces them to a profession can greatly expand children's knowledge of the world and inspire them to think about a career.

Coordinate with community programs for school-age children as often as possible.

Some school-age programs are able to coordinate with other groups offering activities such as scouts, team sports, gymnastics, dance, or art classes. These might be held in the same building as your program, or at a nearby location. Interested children can attend, with their parents' written permission. Special interest clubs offered by the school-age program also offer opportunities for children to expand their understanding of the world at large.

Try these suggestions.

The school-age program can offer children opportunities to contribute to the larger community. Some examples follow:

- Knitting hats and mittens to donate to a homeless shelter.
- Making regular visits to a nursing home or hospital to assist residents or patients by writing letters, telling jokes, reading, or just talking to them.
- Making audiotapes of favorite books for community groups such as child care or Head Start programs, the local library, or the children's ward at a hospital.
- Spending an hour a month, supervised by staff or parent volunteers, picking up litter on a stretch of road.
- Helping address and stuff envelopes for a community fundraiser.
- Putting on a talent show and donating the money raised to an organization that helps victims of natural disasters.
- Writing to national and international environmental groups to learn about ways to preserve natural resources and prevent pollution.

Projects such as these might involve some or all of the children. Finding ways to involve all children, at whatever level is appropriate for them, helps make the school-age program feel like a community. For example, once a month children might make sandwiches for a homeless shelter. Each age group could have a different role: the youngest age group bags the sandwiches after the middle age group makes them, and the oldest age group shops for the ingredients and delivers the finished sandwiches.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you plan and implement a strategy for involving children in the community at large. Your strategy can involve the full group, target a specific age group, or respond to children's interests. Invite children to help you plan and carry out your strategy, then answer the questions that follow. Begin by reviewing the example.

Involving Children in the Community at Large

(Example)

Planners: *Members of the Puppet Club*

Date: *February 6-17*

Describe your strategy:

Putting on a puppet show for the Head Start children.

Why did you select this strategy?

The Puppet Club has made some interesting puppets and produced some funny plays.

Several children in the school-age program have siblings in Head Start.

This strategy can involve children of different ages.

How will this strategy involve children in the community at large?

It will allow children from the school-age program to contribute to Head Start. Many of the school-age children are Head Start graduates and feel strong ties to the program.

Which children do you anticipate being involved?

Members of the Puppet Club and anyone else who is interested.

What will you and the children do?

Contact the Head Start director to find out if she is interested in having a puppet show. Ask which puppets and plays the children would like. Set a time for the show.

Practice until "perfect," then take our show "on the road."

Carry out your plan, then answer the questions below.

What happened?

The Head Start director and teachers were pleased the school-age children wanted to put on a puppet show. They asked us to come in about ten days.

The Puppet Club selected a play they had adapted from a favorite book. They added a few new characters.

The club practiced every afternoon. Several children worked on the new puppets.

The club performed their play. The children and teachers were very pleased. They asked if the children could come back to do another play.

The Puppet Club members told everyone about their experience at the next group meeting. The other children seemed very interested in working with Head Start and other programs such as Daisy and Cub Scout troops.

What would you change, if anything, about this strategy?

There are lots of ways the school-age children could contribute to the community. We could expand this strategy to involve more children and different kinds of contributions.

Involving Children in the Community at Large

Planners: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Describe your strategy:

Why did you select this strategy?

How will this strategy involve children in the community at large?

Which children do you anticipate being involved?

What will you and the children do?

Carry out your plan, then answer the questions below.

What happened?

What would you change, if anything, about this strategy?

Discuss this activity with your trainer and your colleagues.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module probably has helped you develop new skills for promoting social development. Before you go on, take a few minutes to summarize what you've learned.

- Turn back to Learning Activity I, Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Promote Social Development, and add specific examples to the charts of what you learned about helping children gain social skills while you were working on this module. Compare your ideas to those in the completed charts at the end of the module.
- Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Promoting Children's Social Development

Encouraging Children to Develop Friendships and Enjoy Being With Their Peers

1. **Why did Ms. Stuart step in to help the boys find a place to be together?**
   a. She recognized it was important for Emilio and Charles to have an opportunity to be with each other, just enjoying each other's company.
   b. She could see they were feeling frustrated because they had already moved twice.
2. **How did Ms. Stuart support the boys' friendship?**
   a. She helped Emilio and Charles find a place where they wouldn't be in anyone's way.
   b. She commented on their supply of funny jokes.

Helping Children Understand and Respect the Feelings of Others

1. **What social skills did children use during the group meeting?**
   a. They took turns speaking.
   b. They listened while others were speaking (except Zack).
   c. Wendy used leadership skills.
2. **How did the group meeting format help children express and understand their own feelings and those of others?**
   a. They followed the same agenda and rules they use every day so they knew they would have a turn to express their feelings.
   b. Wendy reminded Zack of the rule about not interrupting others.
   c. They had a specific time to raise problems and talk about solutions.

Providing an Environment and Experiences That Help Children Develop Social Skills

1. **How did the road cleanup help children be involved in their community?**

   a. The program has joined a community-wide effort to help keep the roads clean.

   b. The cleanup takes place away from the program.

   c. When they drive on this road, children can feel proud they have helped keep it clean.

2. **How did Ms. Caruso make the clean-up activity enjoyable for the children?**

   a. She started a contest to find the largest piece of trash.

   b. She let Clay know the children's work was appreciated.

GLOSSARY

Peer	A friend or companion who is the same age, at the same developmental level, or otherwise linked by similar characteristics.
Social development	The gradual process through which children gain the ability to use social skills such as—sharing, cooperating, experiencing empathy, and reaching consensus—needed to interact positively with others and to contribute to society.

Module 10:

GUIDANCE

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OVERVIEW

GUIDING SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR INVOLVES:

- providing an environment that encourages children's self-discipline;
- using positive methods to guide individual children; and
- helping children understand and express their feelings in acceptable ways.

Children need adult guidance.

Children need adults to guide them—to help them learn what behaviors are acceptable and what are not, and to help them learn to live cooperatively with others. How you as an adult offer this guidance depends on your goals. What kind of adults do you want children to become? Do you want them to behave a certain way out of fear, or because they have learned what is acceptable and what is not?

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's own behavior. People who are self-disciplined make independent choices based on what they believe is right. They are able to balance their own needs with those of others. They can accept the results of their actions.

Children are not born with self-discipline. As John Dewey noted (1938, 1969), adults need to provide positive guidance that teaches children to make their own decisions, tell the difference between right and wrong, solve problems, and correct their own mistakes. This module is about guiding children's behavior in ways that help them develop self-discipline.

There are reasons for children's behavior.

There is a reason for all behavior—and children misbehave for many different reasons. Gina may be at a developmental stage where she needs to test the limits of her own control. Carson may be forced into a schedule that conflicts with his natural rhythm. Haki may be confused because his parents have different rules and expectations than those at the program. Nancy may be having difficulty coping with her father's illness. Sometimes children behave inappropriately simply because they are bored, tired, curious, or frustrated.

To help children learn self-discipline, it is important to think about the reasons for their behavior. For example, you may ask a child to stop playing a board game because he or she keeps throwing the pieces on the floor. Later, you also need to think about why the child was throwing the pieces. When you identify the need the child is expressing (for example, "I want to play with my friend, but I don't understand the rules") you can then try to meet that need. When you do have to take something away (the opportunity to play the game), you must later replace it with what the child needs (the opportunity to have an adult explain the rules).

Because adults are powerful, they can make children behave in certain ways. But children who are punished or forced to behave in certain ways, and punished when they don't, learn the following lessons:

- I am a bad person.
- I need to watch out for adults.
- I had better not get caught.

These children are likely to behave only when someone is watching. Their goal is to avoid being punished. They do not learn to value acceptable behavior for itself, and they do not learn self-discipline.

Positive guidance encourages self-discipline.

If you have developed a supportive relationship with the children in the program, you are already doing a lot to promote self-discipline. Children depend on you and want your approval. They look to you to help them learn what is acceptable and what is not. If you involve children in setting program rules that fit their developmental and individual needs, they are likely to learn and follow the rules easily. If you are consistent in applying rules, children will try to follow them. If you set up an environment that supports self-control, children will find it easier to achieve. If you look for the reasons behind their behavior, you may be able to help children learn acceptable ways to express their feelings. And if you learn some positive techniques for guiding children, you will help them develop self-discipline.

Listed on the next page are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in guiding children's behavior.

Providing an Environment That Encourages Children's Self-Discipline

Make sure there are no safety hazards in the environment. "Thank you for pointing out that the aquarium table is wobbling. Someone could have bumped into it and tipped it over. We can move the aquarium to a safer location until the table is fixed."

Store materials and equipment within children's reach. "It's time to clean up. Please put the blocks back on the shelf now. You can build with them again tomorrow."

Speak to children with the same tone and respect they use with adults. "Please write down your ideas for our next field trip and put them in the suggestion box. Carrie and Peter will tally the results so we can discuss the top three choices at our next group meeting."

Arrange the materials and furniture to encourage appropriate behavior. "When Sandy wants to be alone, she likes to sit in the reading nook."

Involve children in making the program's rules. "The school year is ending, so the program will be open full time for the summer. Could you please help me get everyone together so we can talk about the rules we will need for summer activities."

Plan a schedule that includes many opportunities for children to choose what they want to do. "Good morning, Derek . Breakfast will be ready in 20 minutes. What would you like to do until the food is ready?"

Involve children in planning activities and selecting materials and equipment that match their skills and interests. "Tell me about some of the things you like to do. You might be able to do some of them at the program."

Plan some games and activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition. "In today's Cooking Club we'll be making two big pots of vegetable soup. One is for us and one is to share with the senior citizen's center."

Using Positive Methods to Guide Individual Children

Hold conversations in private when you need to discuss a child's misbehavior. "Drew, I need to talk with you privately for a minute."

Allow children to experience the natural and logical consequences of their actions. "Marisa, your sculpture was damaged when it got knocked off the table. Next time let's try to remember to store fragile projects on the top shelf."

Consider the reasons for a child's behavior. "Renée (11 years) seems to be getting into a lot of fights with other children. Maybe she needs more one-on-one attention from a staff member."

Give genuine, positive praise for appropriate behavior. "Yancey, I've noticed Marvin wants to do everything you do. You were really patient with him when you showed him to how draw Donald Duck."

Redirect children to acceptable activities. "Susan and Nina, your singing is disturbing the children who are reading. Could you please use softer voices or move your practice session to the other side of the room?"

Offer assistance to children who are screaming or thrashing because they are out of control. Help them to calm down so they won't hurt themselves or others. "I can see you are feeling very upset. Take my hand. We'll sit on the couch for a few minutes until you feel ready to talk about what happened."

Use simple, positive reminders to state and restate rules. "Use the safety equipment when you're playing street hockey."

Give children time to handle disagreements on their own. "Patrick and Brandon sometimes bicker with each other when they play chess. They tend to work out their disagreements without adult assistance."

Helping Children Understand and Express Their Feelings in Acceptable Ways

Listen when an angry child needs to talk about his or her feelings. "Jane, can you tell me about what made you feel angry? I will listen very carefully."

Tell children you accept their feelings, even when their actions are not acceptable. "Tad, I think you felt embarrassed when you struck out, but it's not okay to throw the bat. You'll have to miss your next turn up to bat."

Model acceptable ways to express negative feelings. "I've asked you twice to please lower your voices. Your loud voices are making my headache worse."

Teach children how to use conflict resolution techniques to settle their differences. "Aaron and Wesley, I can see that you both think you are 'right.' Cool off for a few minutes, then you can discuss what happened and what you need to do to solve your problem."

Provide creative outlets for expressing feelings. "Sometimes it helps to write a letter to the editor explaining how you feel. The address for the newspaper is on the bulletin board."

Talk to children about their concerns, feelings, interests, and activities at home and school. "Janet, how was your weekend? Did you have fun at your ice-skating party?"

Use group meetings at times when children can raise concerns and develop solutions. "You can bring up your concern about the trash on the playground at our meeting. We'll work together to come up with a solution."

Work with parents to help a child with a challenging behavior learn acceptable ways to express feelings. "Mr. Harper, Shellie had a great day today. I think our strategies for helping her use words to express her feelings are really working."

Guiding Children's Behavior

In the following situations, school-age staff are guiding children's behavior. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Providing an Environment That Encourages Children's Self-Discipline

Katy asks Ms. Mingus if the program can get some new board games. Ms. Mingus looks puzzled. "I thought we had a pretty good selection of games, Katy. Which new ones do you think we need?" Katy responds, "Well, we don't need new games. Just new copies of the ones we already have. Lots of times when we try to play a game some pieces are missing. Like when Jessica and I wanted to play Connect Four we couldn't, because someone took the checkers." Ms. Mingus says, "This sounds like a problem with the way we are storing and taking care of the games. Before we buy new ones, we need to think of a better way to take care of the games we have. Would you like to help organize the games?" Katy agrees and asks Mike and Terrence to help her

By the time Ms. Mingus joins the children they have placed all the games on a table with the lids off. Most of the boxes are ripped and pieces from some games have made their way into the boxes of others. It looks like a big job. She asks the children if they need anything. Katy asks for some strong tape to repair the boxes. Terrence asks for some small plastic bags. "You know," he says, "the kind with zippers on the top." Ms. Mingus tells the children where they can find both tape and plastic bags. She asks if they need any more help. "No thanks, " says Mike. "I'm good at getting organized." Ms. Mingus says, "While you're sorting and repairing, you can also think about how to store these games from now on. Our old system didn't work very well."

1. How did Ms. Mingus demonstrate respect for the children?

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2. How did Ms. Mingus encourage children's self-discipline?

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Using Positive Methods to Guide Individual Children

Kendall is the last child off the bus today. She walks slowly to the door. Ms. Anton greets her, "Hi, Kendall. You're our last customer today!" "So what," replies Kendall, dragging her backpack along the floor. Ms. Anton thinks to herself, "That's not like Kendall. Perhaps something is bothering her." She follows Kendall inside. Kendall is stuffing her belongings into her cubby. "These cubbies are too small," she says to nobody in particular, but within Ms. Anton's hearing. Later, at the Newspaper Club's meeting, Kendall sits by herself on the edge of the group. Ms. Anton watches her out of the corner of one eye. Throughout the meeting Kendall fidgets, looks at the clock, stares at the floor, and avoids participating. Again Ms. Anton wonders what's going on, "Kendall is usually very outspoken. I'd better see if she wants to talk." After the meeting Kendall returns to her cubby, takes out her backpack, and drags it to the quiet area. Ms. Anton catches up with her there. "Kendall," she says, "if you're not too busy, can we talk for a minute? I'd like to hear more about the social studies project you described last week." Kendall responds, "Of course I'm busy. All the sixth grade teachers think we have nothing else to do but their stupid homework. I'm never going to get it all done." Ms. Anton puts her hand on Kendall's shoulder, "I can hear that you feel overwhelmed. Can I join you at the homework table? We can work together to make a plan for getting the work done." "Okay," says Kendall, almost in tears, "That sounds like a good idea." Ms. Anton sits with Kendall and helps her make a schedule. Once Kendall sees the workload is manageable, she relaxes and tells Ms. Anton how her social studies project is going. "Yesterday we wrote a list of all the things we're going to take on our journey down the Nile. . . "

1. How did Ms. Anton know Kendall was upset?

2. How did Ms. Anton's guidance help Kendall learn self-discipline?

Helping Children Understand and Express Their Feelings in Acceptable Ways

Nicky and Brad are working together on a mural. "Nicky," says Brad in an angry voice, "I'm doing the fish underneath the ocean. You're supposed to be doing the boats on top." "I want to do the fish, too," says Nicky. "Why can't I do some fish and some boats?" "Cause your fish don't look like mine and you're wrecking the mural," replies Brad, his voice getting louder. "I'm going to get Mr. Franklin." Mr. Franklin hears his name and walks over to the boys. "Did I hear my name?" he asks. Brad and Nicky both talk at once trying to tell their side of the argument. Mr. Franklin asks the boys to be quiet so he can make a suggestion. "How about if you go sit on the couch and discuss your problem? If you haven't solved it in three minutes, you can set the timer again, or ask for my help." The boys agree to try to solve their problem without his help. They get the timer off the shelf and head for the couch. Three minutes pass very quickly. Mr. Franklin looks up from a game of chess with another child and sees Nicky and Brad back at work on the mural. When the game is over he asks the boys, "How did you solve your problem?" he asks. "It was easy," says Brad. "I'm going to draw fish and Nicky is going to draw sea creatures, like eels and octopus. Tomorrow we'll both do boats." Mr. Franklin complimented the boys, "You did a great job solving your problem. You worked it out quickly so now you can have fun doing your mural."

1. **Why did Mr. Franklin suggest the boys sit down on the couch to discuss their problem?**

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2. **How did Mr. Franklin help the boys express their feelings in acceptable ways?**

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Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Self-Discipline

Some behavior is automatic.

Often behavior is automatic. You don't stop to think about what you should do; you just do it. When you put money in a parking meter, come to work on time, or thank a store clerk, you are probably acting without thinking about what you are doing. You have learned and accepted certain rules of behavior and, because you have self-discipline, don't need to be reminded of them.

Self-discipline guides your behavior at work in many ways.

- You let your supervisor know when you're sick so a substitute can be called.
- You let a colleague know you are angry with her by telling her what you feel.
- You volunteer to help a colleague who's having difficulty understanding a child's behavior.
- You don't make long-distance calls on the program's phone.

List below a few examples of how self-discipline guides your behavior at work:

Self-discipline also guides your behavior at home.

- You remember to water the plants because you know they'll die if you don't.
- You clean the frying pan so it will be ready to use in the morning.
- You say no to a second piece of cake because you shouldn't have so much sugar.

List some examples of how self-discipline guides your behavior at home:

Think of a time when you did not show self-discipline. What affected your loss of control?

What does this tell you about what children need to gain self-discipline?

Some adults have problems making their own decisions about how to behave. They are most comfortable when they have rules and guidelines to follow. They may respond only to promises of rewards or threats of punishment. Perhaps they come to work on time only because they're afraid of being fired or having their pay docked. When these adults were children, they probably didn't have many opportunities to make their own decisions. They weren't able to develop inner controls.

Staff can model self-discipline.

Being in control of your behavior usually leads to higher self-esteem. Having good feelings about yourself will make you a more effective and skilled school-age staff member. Your self-discipline is a good model for the children. They will learn a lot from being in the company of a responsible, competent person.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions for the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to guide children's behavior. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Providing an Environment That Encourages Children's Self-Discipline	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Following a daily schedule that allows children to choose their own activities.	☐	☐	☐
2. Making sure there are no safety hazards in the environment.	☐	☐	☐
3. Storing materials and equipment within children's reach.	☐	☐	☐
4. Involving children in setting limits and making rules.	☐	☐	☐
5. Involving children in planning activities and selecting materials and equipment that match their skills and interests.	☐	☐	☐
6. Planning some games and activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition.	☐	☐	☐
7. Arranging the environment to encourage appropriate behavior (for example, creating clear traffic patterns so children don't get in each other's way).	☐	☐	☐
8. Speaking to children with the same tone and respect you use with adults.	☐	☐	☐

Using Positive Methods to Guide Individual Children	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
9. Considering the possible reasons for a child's behavior.	☐	☐	☐
10. Redirecting children from inappropriate to appropriate activities (for example, suggesting to children who are "horsing around" they go outdoors or to the gym to use some energy).	☐	☐	☐
11. Giving children opportunities to handle their disagreements without adult assistance.	☐	☐	☐
12. Stating directions and reminding children of rules in positive terms (for example, "walk to the gym").	☐	☐	☐
13. Giving genuine, positive praise for appropriate behavior.	☐	☐	☐
14. Discussing children's misbehavior in private conversations.	☐	☐	☐
15. Allowing children to experience the natural and logical consequences of their actions.	☐	☐	☐
16. Offering assistance to children who are out of control.	☐	☐	☐
Helping Children Understand and Express Their Feelings in Acceptable Ways			
17. Listening to and accepting children's angry feelings while helping them understand the consequences of expressing those feelings inappropriately.	☐	☐	☐
18. Talking to children about their day at school, their friends, their concerns, and their feelings.	☐	☐	☐
19. Holding group meetings during which children can raise concerns and grievances and work together to develop solutions.	☐	☐	☐

Helping Children Understand and Express Their Feelings in Acceptable Ways
(continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
20. Modeling appropriate ways to express negative feelings.	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing creative outlets such as writing, painting, and staging puppet shows for expressing strong feelings.	☐	☐	☐
22. Working with parents to help a child with a problem (such as getting into physical or verbal fights) express his or her feelings in acceptable ways.	☐	☐	☐
23. Teaching children how to use conflict resolution techniques to resolve their differences.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

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Begin the learning activities for Module 10, Guidance.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Behavior 199
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Learning Activity I.

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Behavior

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize some typical behaviors of school-age children; and
- use what you know about children to help them learn self-discipline.

It is important to have age-appropriate expectations for behavior.

Understanding children's behavior is the first step in helping them learn self-discipline. By learning what children can and can't do at each stage of their development, you are more likely to have appropriate expectations for their behavior. Knowing what behavior is typical at different ages allows you to provide guidance that reflects developmental characteristics. For example, if you know it is typical for 5- to 7-year-olds to have difficulty sharing, then you can provide duplicates of their favorite play materials. If you know it is typical for 11- to 12-year-olds to test the limits, you will not take it personally if they talk back to you.

Moral development occurs at the same time as cognitive development.

Most school-age children understand the difference between right and wrong. The reasons they give for doing what is "right" may differ depending on their stage of development. Lawrence Kohlberg and other researchers have studied how children in the United States and other countries make moral decisions. His theories state that moral development occurs at the same time as cognitive development. As children gain cognitive skills, they use these skills to make more advanced moral decisions. The levels and stages of moral development defined by Kohlberg include the following:[1]

Level 1: Preconventional Moral Reasoning

Stage 1: Children behave because they want to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Children's behavior is related to rewards and self-interest. Something is the "right" thing to do if it makes the child feel good or if it results in a reward.

Many of the younger children in your program are likely to be at this stage.

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[1] Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

Level 2: Conventional Moral Reasoning

Stage 3: Children follow certain rules and limits as set by others—usually adults such as parents and teachers. They follow the rules in order to receive praise for being "good" or to maintain order.

Stage 4: Children have developed an understanding of concepts such as obeying the law, applying justice consistently, doing something because it is your duty, and maintaining the social order.

The older children in your program are likely to use Level 2 moral reasoning.

Level 3: Postconventional Moral Reasoning

Stage 5: Individuals understand the relative nature of personal values and society's laws. They understand the importance of laws to society, but also recognize there are times when laws must be changed.

Stage 6: Individuals make moral decisions based on a belief in human rights. The individual might imagine him or herself in a similar situation and make the decision accordingly.

Level 3 moral reasoning is used by a small percentage of adults and almost never by children.

Think of Kohlberg's theories when guiding children's behavior.

Kohlberg's theories do not explain all of the reasons for children's behavior. However, it is helpful to keep them in mind when explaining the reasons for certain rules or limits or when considering how to respond to children's misbehavior. An example follows.

In preparation for a field trip to a large museum, the staff meet with the children to discuss the rules for the trip. One rule is children will pick a partner and stay with that person during the trip. Mr. Granger explains, "This rule is needed so we can keep track of the children. Children who do not stay with their partners will miss the next field trip." On the trip, most of the children follow this rule, however they have different reasons for doing so.

A child at Stage 1 stays with his partner because he is afraid he will not get to go on the next trip if he doesn't.

A child at Stage 2 stays with her partner, a good friend, because she wants to have a good time on the trip.

A child at Stage 3 stays with his partner because he wants to please the staff.

> A child at Stage 4 stays with her partner because she knows obeying the rule makes it easier for the staff to keep track of the group.

To learn more about how children develop moral reasoning skills, consult the resources listed in the Orientation.

Applying Your Knowledge

The charts that follow list some typical behaviors of children at ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12. Included are behaviors relevant to helping children develop self-discipline The right column asks you to identify ways staff can use this information to promote self-discipline. Try to think of as many examples as you can. As you work through the module, you will learn new strategies and you can add them to the charts. You are not expected to think of all the examples at once. If you need help getting started, turn to the completed charts at the end of the module. By the time you complete this module, you will find you have learned many ways to guide children's behavior.

As you complete the charts that follow, keep in mind that many of the examples of children's behavior and staff responses apply to more than one age group. Developmentally appropriate programs are based on child development and are responsive to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Therefore, it is important to observe children regularly, and to use what you learn to individualize the program.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They can think through problems in their minds.	*When children disagree, encourage them to use their thinking skills to resolve their differences. Ask open-ended questions to extend their thinking—"What might happen if . . .?" "What other ways could you do that . . .?" Give children plenty of time to think through problems on their own. For example, when two children decide to play a board game, watch as they discuss the rules rather than stepping in to explain them.*
Their attention span increases.	
They may still have difficulty sharing and taking turns.	
They may have difficulty controlling their behavior in group situations.	
They like teamwork and following rules. They may disagree about what rules say and what is "fair."	
They become more and more independent.	
They may hide their feelings, fears, and worries from adults.	

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They expand and use their reasoning skills to solve problems, negotiate, and compromise with peers.	*Teach children to use conflict resolution as a way to work through problems. When children try to get you to solve their differences, encourage them to assume responsibility for resolving their differences. Model techniques such as negotiation and compromise as you work with children.*
They develop their own games with complicated rules and may fight when they think someone has broken the rules.	
They learn to express their anger and frustration in acceptable ways.	
They learn to use good judgment.	
They learn to accept responsibility for their actions.	
They do more and more on their own, without adult supervision or direction.	

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They are able to negotiate, compromise, and solve problems.	*Teach children how to present and support their opinions when they differ with those of a friend. Help them learn to listen to another person's point of view.*
They may test program rules and adult authority and talk back to staff members.	
They may be in a hurry to grow up and may mimic teenage behaviors.	
They may have their judgment tested by strong peer group influences.	
They may "swear" because they think it is "cool." These words are generally used in daily conversations with their peers rather than in anger.	
They may test the limits of their physical skills.	
They begin to think in abstract terms; they can think about the consequences of their actions.	

When you have completed as much as you can of these charts, discuss your answers with your trainer. As you do the rest of the learning activities, you can refer back to the charts and add more examples of how school-age staff promote children's self-discipline.

Learning Activity II.

Creating an Environment That Supports Self-Discipline

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- arrange the environment in ways that support positive behaviors; and
- encourage children to be involved in planning and making decisions about program operations.

Well-planned environments can prevent behavior problems.

A supportive environment for school-age children includes both physical and social elements that are responsive to children's needs, skills, and interests. Physical elements include well-stocked interest areas, materials stored where children can reach them, and displays of children's work. Social elements include practices such as including children in planning sessions, allowing children to choose the activities they want to do, and talking politely to children—even when reminding them of a program rule. When the physical and social environments are well-planned and demonstrate respect for children's abilities, many potential behavior problems can be prevented.

The physical environment should allow children to make choices.

As discussed in Module 3, Program Environment, it is important to arrange the indoor and outdoor areas used by the program so children can choose their own activities. They can play alone or with friends and can use the interest areas with little or no adult assistance. This structure gives you and other staff members time to observe children, talk with them, and provide assistance to those who ask for help.

Try these suggestions.

Examples of how the physical environment can prevent behavior problems follow.

Individual cubbies are available so children can store personal belongings. Children know items in the cubbies are "off limits," so disagreements about using other's belongings without permission are avoided. Also, children learn to take care of their own things and those of the program.

The daily schedule is posted at children's eye level. Children can see, for example, that permission slips need to be in by tomorrow for next week's field trip. Staff also remind children verbally, as some children remember better from listening rather than reading. Children tend to feel more secure when they know what's going on at the program.

Supplies for cleaning up spills and messes are stored where children can reach them. Children know it is their responsibility to use brooms, mops, paper towels, and sponges to clean up their spills. Staff help children learn the consequences of their actions, "You filled the pitcher too close to the top and the water left a trail from the sink to the aquarium. Please get the mop and wipe up the water."

Materials that are used together are stored together. Children are able to find what they need to carry out their plans. Clean-up time goes more smoothly because the materials are stored near where they are used.

Materials are stored where children can reach them. Children feel independent because they do not have to wait for adults to get out the materials and supplies.

There are comfortable places to sit and read or talk with a friend. A pile of pillows, an old stuffed chair, or a couch is available so children can relax, relieve stress, or spend some time alone when they need to take a break from the group or regain their composure.

There are clearly defined spaces for different activities and clear traffic patterns. This prevents children from getting in the way of each other's play and projects. Children can play or work without being interrupted. Conflicts that result from a child accidentally getting in the way of another are avoided.

The environment can be rearranged to accommodate changing needs and interests. Interest areas that children no longer use are replaced with new ones that children have asked for. Children don't get bored because the environment provides opportunities to learn new skills.

The outdoor play area is used for a variety of activities. Club meetings, talking to friends, cooperative games, sports, gardening, and reading take place outdoors. Many children benefit from spending part of the day outdoors. The fresh air and open spaces are energizing after spending most of the school day indoors. Being outdoors helps children expend energy that might otherwise be used in less positive ways.

A positive, cooperative social atmosphere can also help prevent problem behaviors. Involving children in program operations recognizes their important contributions and gives them a sense of responsibility. Talking with individual children; holding group meetings; listening to children's complaints, concerns, and suggestions; and responding to children's requests all let them know their participation is valued.

A positive social atmosphere can also prevent behavior problems.

Some examples of ways the social environment can prevent behavior problems follow.

Try these suggestions.

Children are involved in making decisions that affect the program. "Someone has offered to give us a guinea pig as a pet for our program. Do you think we should accept him?"

Staff notice children's interests and try to reflect them in the program's activities. "I heard some of you talking about the kite festival that's coming up. Would you be interested in starting a Kite Club?"

Staff use a normal tone and volume when speaking with children. They stand close by so they don't have to yell to be heard. "Ask Hannah to let go of the hula hoop and tell her you aren't through using it."

Cooperation is valued and praised. "That was quite a mess when Larry dropped the box of toothpicks. Thank you for helping him pick them up."

Children participate in the daily routines that keep the program running smoothly. "In addition to clean-up and snack, the jobs you can volunteer to do are mixing paint, changing the bulletin board, cleaning the rabbit's cage, and setting up a woodworking area."

Children are involved in setting the program's rules and limits. "Before the Cooking Club begins cooking we need to make some safety rules. Cherie, has offered to write down your suggestions."

Children are encouraged to help each other. "Sharon can you show Justin how you made your basket? He's having a hard time getting started."

Staff teach children cooperative games and minimize competition in other activities. "Those of you who drew safety posters worked very hard. If we post some of them now, then rotate them throughout the year, we'll be able to display everyone's work."

When problem behaviors occur again and again in your program it is important to look for patterns. When do problems occur? In what areas of the environment—indoors and outdoors—do problems surface? Which children are involved? What are the children usually doing? Take turns observing, then discuss your observations with your colleagues. Look for the cause of the problem behavior. For example:

> The arts and crafts area has been the site of several arguments this week. The staff take turns observing children in the area to see what might be causing the problems. At the end of the week they meet to discuss their notes. They conclude that problems occur when: there are more children than chairs; children get in each other's way; children have to wait to use scissors, glue, and some of the other materials and equipment. They also conclude that children painting at easels are not involved in the disagreements; and children sitting at tables making collages, using clay, painting with water colors, and working on quilting squares are frequently involved in disagreements. They decide to provide more scissors and glue immediately. In addition, they post a notice of a meeting to involve children who use the area frequently in solving the other problems. Children attending the meeting agree on the following strategies: expand the area to include part of the space now set aside for hobby displays—this area is not being used; designate each of the three tables for different activities so children can share tools and materials; meet again in one week to discuss how things are going.

Observe the program to identify possible causes of problem behavior.

When the physical and social environments are "working," children are busy and happily engaged in play and activities. Fights are few and the school-age program is a pleasant place to be. In contrast, when the environment is not well-planned, children may be frustrated and unable to enjoy their out-of-school time. Of course, there are many possible causes for children's misbehavior; however, it's a good idea to consider how the environment might be contributing to the problems.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you consider how aspects of the physical and social environment can affect children's behavior. You look at some typical behavior problems and how the environment can be the cause or the solution. Read the examples below, then use the chart that follows to plan ways to change the environment to address common behavior problems.

Creating an Environment That Promotes Self-Discipline

(Example)

Children's Behavior	Possible Problems in the Environment	How You Might Change the Environment
Some children form cliques and exclude others from their group.	*There is too much emphasis on competition. Staff members may be reluctant to get involved when children pick on someone because they think it will make it worse for the child who is excluded.*	*Encourage a more cooperative atmosphere. Have children do chores together, teach them cooperative games, eliminate contests, and meet with the cliques to help them understand their behavior is hurtful to others.*
The younger children in particular wander around with nothing to do.	*Materials may be stored out of the reach of the younger children. Activities may be geared towards older children. Older children may be excluding the younger ones.*	*Make sure materials are stored on open shelves where all children can reach them. Review the daily schedule to make sure there are age-appropriate activities for all children. Plan activities such as blowing giant bubbles that encourage children of different ages to get to know one another.*
Group meetings often become shouting matches between children with opposing points of view.	*Staff members may raise their voices when trying to get children's attention. There may be no guidelines for speaking out during a group meeting. Children may need the staff to impose some structure so they can learn to share their opinions calmly.*	*Work with children to develop some guidelines for speaking out in group meetings. Agree on consequences (losing your turn to speak for a day) for children who don't follow these rules. Make a pact with other staff to use a normal voice level at all times.*

Creating an Environment That Promotes Self-Discipline

Children's Behavior	Possible Problems in the Environment	How You Might Change the Environment
Children accuse each other of cheating when playing board games.		
Children get into fights when they can't use a material or piece of equipment.		
Children begin projects but do not finish them.		
Children make fun of others because something about them is different.		
Children can't find their belongings when it's time to go home.		

Check your answers with the answer sheet at the end of this module and discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one answer.

Learning Activity III.
Guiding Children's Behavior

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use positive approaches to guide children's behavior; and
- use strategies tailored to an individual child's needs.

Discipline and punishment are very different.

Often the words punishment and discipline are used to mean the same thing, but they are actually very different. Punishment means controlling children's behavior through fear. It makes children behave because they are afraid of what might happen to them if they don't. Children who are punished may stop their negative behavior temporarily, but they are not learning to use self-discipline. Instead, punishment may lead to or reinforce their bad feelings about themselves.

Discipline means guiding and directing children toward acceptable behavior. The most important goal of discipline is to help children learn how to control their own behavior. Self-control is not a skill children are born with. It is learned through daily interactions with other children and adults. Learning self-discipline takes a lot of time, but it is time well spent. Children who are self-disciplined tend to be more successful in school and in life. They can set goals and take the steps needed to accomplish them. They find it easier to get along with their peers and with adults.

Children express feelings through behavior.

Often, children do not understand their feelings or how to express them. Even children with highly developed verbal skills may not understand feelings and may find it hard to express them with words. When children break the program's rules, talk back to adults, refuse to participate, destroy materials, or bicker with their friends, it is important to think about what their behavior means. What is the child trying to express? You can then respond in ways that help children control their behavior. Children's behaviors may be "telling" you many different things:

- "I feel lonely because my friend is playing with someone else. That's why I can't find anything to do."
- "I am angry because today at school my teacher yelled at me for no reason. That's why I lost my temper and hit Shawn."

- "I am afraid the other children will laugh at me when it's my turn at bat. That's why I went back inside without telling anyone."
- "I want my story to be perfect. That's why I keep ripping up my papers."
- "I need some limits because I'm not sure what it means to be an "almost teenager." That's why I'm using swear words."
- "I can't do what you asked me to do. That's why I said you are mean and none of the kids like you."

Accept children's negative feelings.

It's also important for adults to recognize and accept children's negative feelings. We all have days when we feel bad or don't want to do certain tasks. You can help children learn to recognize when they aren't feeling good. You can also provide ways for children to express their feelings without hurting themselves, other people, or the program's materials. When you see children are feeling frustrated, you can redirect them to listen to a soothing tape, run around the playground a few times, or read in the quiet area. These are soothing activities that help many children feel better.

Some inappropriate behaviors are accidental or careless more than deliberate. For example, a child may accidentally spill paint and then laugh when asked to clean up. Respond to such behaviors firmly but quietly; you don't need to dwell on them if they aren't part of a pattern of limit-testing behaviors.

Learning Activities I and II discussed how some problem behaviors can be avoided by having appropriate expectations for children's behaviors and by creating a supportive environment. Anticipating and planning for possible problems is another prevention technique. For example, if children are going to the bowling alley, staff can prevent potential problems by reviewing the procedures for walking there and the expectations for children's behavior at the alley. If a child has difficulty handling change, staff can explain that this week's trip to the swimming pool will take place on Thursday, not Wednesday.

Try these suggestions.

There are times when staff need to directly guide children's behavior. No single approach works for every child or every situation. The approach used should relate to the child and to the problem. The following positive guidance approaches are suggested:

Help children use problem-solving skills to develop solutions. "Gene, I can see you and Carlos are having a hard time agreeing on how to build the space station. How can you both have a chance to use your ideas?"

Talk with children privately away from the rest of the group. "I'd like to discuss your behavior during the gymnastics show. Let's talk privately for a few minutes."

Use a pre-arranged individual signal to remind a child to use self-control. "If I see you need some help controlling your temper I'll pull on my ear lobe. Then you can take a couple of deep breaths or close your eyes for a minute until you relax."

Focus on the child's behavior, not on the child. "Thank you for helping us carry the bag of balls in from the field," rather than "you're a good girl for being so helpful."

Help children understand the consequences of their actions and help them make amends. "Tim, I know you were fooling around and didn't mean to do harm, but Lisa is angry with you because you wrote on her picture. What can you do to make it up to her."

Assume the role of the authority only when necessary—but do so firmly. Your firm voice will help children learn to obey automatically in certain situations. "Don't move, Chaundra! A car is coming."

Gain control of your own angry feelings before disciplining a child. Ask for help from a colleague when needed. "Ms. Reynolds, Jennifer has talked back to me one too many times. I need to calm down for a few minutes. Could you please cover for me? "

Intervene in children's conflicts when necessary to prevent injuries. "Trinh and Kyle, I can't let you hurt each other. You need to leave the game so you can resolve your disagreement. Use your words to communicate with each other, not your fists. Kyle, you can go first. Trinh will listen to you without interrupting. Then it will be Trinh's turn to talk while you listen."

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you keep track of how you guide the behavior of an individual child over a five-day period. Take notes on what you see the child doing and how you respond. After reviewing your notes, plan ways to use the information to help the child develop self-discipline. Begin by reviewing the example on the next page.

Guiding Children's Behavior

(Example)

Child: *Martha* **Age:** *8 years* **Dates:** *January 19-23*

Day One

Martha was playing hopscotch with Leah. Stacy tried to join them. Martha told Stacy she couldn't play because she didn't know how. Stacy and Martha got into a pushing match. Stacy fell down. I walked over and asked Stacy if she was okay. She was so I asked the girls to talk about what happened. The three girls all talked at once. I asked Martha to come with me for a few minutes. We sat under the oak tree and talked about what happened. Martha said she was angry because Stacy always "hogs" Leah and she never gets to play with Leah alone. We talked some more about feelings—hers, Leah's, and Stacy's. Martha asked if I would help her talk to Stacy about what happened. I agreed to help.

Day Two

Martha bumped into Aaron and his juice spilled on his shirt. She immediately apologized and helped him clean off the shirt. Later, I praised her for the way she handled herself.

How can you use what you learned about this child to promote self-discipline?

Martha has strong verbal skills. She is able to talk about her feelings and knows how they are connected to her behavior. It seems like talking about a problem behavior is an appropriate way to guide Martha's behavior.

Martha can consider other children's feelings and make amends for her actions, even if they were unintentional. This skill can be reinforced through genuine praise for her actions.

Guiding Children's Behavior

Child: ______________ **Age:** ______________ **Dates:** ______________

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Day Four

Day Five

How can you use what you learned about this child to promote self-discipline?

Discuss this activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity IV.

Teaching Children to Use Conflict Resolution Techniques[2]

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- teach children how to use conflict resolution techniques; and
- encourage children to resolve conflicts with minimum adult assistance.

Conflicts arise in any group situation.

Conflicts are part of life in a school-age program. They arise between children or between children and staff. When handled effectively, they can be productive and lead to better communication and program improvement. Most conflicts are disagreements about one of the following:

Resources—two or more people want something in short supply. The resource might be materials or equipment, the friendship of a popular child, or your attention. Generally, these conflicts are easy to resolve. Two children fighting over who can sit next to you during a group meeting, might be arguing over a scarce resource—closeness to you.

Needs—for power, friendship, self-esteem, achievement, or a sense of belonging. These can be difficult to resolve because it may be hard to identify the reasons for the conflict. Two children arguing over whose kite flies the highest might be expressing a need for achievement—to have made the "best" kite.

Value clashes—include disagreements over personal beliefs, the right way to do something, or the relative importance of a task. These are the hardest to resolve because individuals feel their sense of self is threatened. Children fighting about which basketball team will win a game may be expressing conflicting values—each child believes a different team to be "best."

When resolving conflicts, begin by determining what type of disagreement is taking place. When a conflict falls into more than one category, respond first to the one that is easiest to resolve. For example, the two children fighting over who gets to sit next to you appear to be fighting over a "resource"—your time and attention. After dealing with this conflict, others may arise that indicate the conflict is also about needs—the children need more individual attention from staff.

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[2] Parts of this learning activity are based with permission on William J. Kreidler, *Creative Conflict Resolution* (W. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1984).

School-age programs can reduce conflicts.

Conflicts may be reduced when the school-age program fits the following description:

The program has a cooperative atmosphere. Many activities encourage children to work with each other. There are some competitive games and contests, but these are balanced with opportunities for children to explore materials and try out new activities. Children learn to work cooperatively. Cooperative behavior is encouraged and rewarded. They focus their energies on enjoying games and sports and are not overly concerned with winning and losing.

Staff and children demonstrate tolerance. Children know how to be nice to each other and to the staff. Prosocial behaviors such as empathy and taking turns are encouraged and rewarded. When cliques form that exclude children from play, adults step in to try to encourage different ways to have fun. Individuals value and respect other children's talents and accomplishments. Diversity is valued.

Children and staff have good communication skills. They know how to express their needs and feelings effectively. There are many opportunities for children to be meaningfully involved in program planning and operations. Children know how to listen to each other, and they understand each other.

Feelings and emotions are expressed appropriately. Staff and children express their anger and frustration by using words to tell others how they feel. Self-discipline is encouraged and rewarded.

Staff have appropriate expectations for children's behavior They use their authority sparingly. There are a few simple rules, the program is loosely structured and flexible, and there is an atmosphere of trust and respect. Children behave because they helped make the rules and they understand the reasons for the rules.

Children and staff use conflict resolution to discuss and develop solutions to conflicts. Conflicts are resolved quickly and fairly, with the full participation of the children and staff involved.

Many conflicts can be solved through mediation.

The most common form of conflict resolution is mediation. Staff help children work out their problems in the presence of a calm, objective observer who will ensure fairness. Fairness is very important to school-age children. To be effective, mediation can take a long time. It is productive time, however, for it helps children develop skills they can use to solve future problems by themselves. Mediation includes the following steps:

- Each child tells his or her side of the story without interruption.
- Each child describes the problem, then what happened in the conflict.
- If the problem still exists, children develop possible solutions.
- If the problem no longer exists, children are asked if there were other ways to solve the problem than the one they chose.

You can use reflective listening to help children resolve their disagreements.

Another technique used to clearly define or end a conflict is reflective listening. Staff members listen to children as they describe the conflict and what happened, then reflect the statements back to the children using statements such as, "Sounds like. . .," "In other words. . .," "I hear you saying that. . ." It is important to reflect the child's feelings as well as the facts of the situation. Children then agree or disagree with the staff member's statement. Often, the use of reflective listening is sufficient to resolve the conflict.

An example follows.

> Raeshawn and Theresa have been rehearsing the dance they plan to perform at next week's talent show. Raeshawn says, "We've practiced enough. I want to go outside to play volleyball." Theresa disagrees, "We need lots more practice. I don't want to make a fool of myself. You can play later." Raeshawn responds, "That's what you think. I'm going outside." Theresa faces Raeshawn and yells, "No." Raeshawn steps back and says, "You're not my boss." Mr. Suarez steps in, "Can someone tell me what's happening? Theresa, you can go first."
>
> Theresa: "She promised to dance in the talent show with me, but now she won't practice and I don't want to look stupid in the show."
>
> Mr. Suarez: "I hear you saying that Raeshawn agreed to dance with you, but she doesn't want to practice and you're worried about looking stupid. Is that right?"
>
> Theresa: "That's right. I don't want to look stupid."
>
> Mr. Suarez: "Theresa, describe what happened."
>
> Raeshawn: "I said I would dance in the talent show with her, and we practiced for half an hour. Now I want to go outside and she won't let me."
>
> Mr. Suarez: "You agreed to be in the talent show, you practiced for half an hour, and you think you know the dance well enough. You want to go outside, but Theresa won't let you. Is that right?"

Raeshawn: "That's partly right. I think we practiced enough for today. I want to go outside and she won't let me."

Mr. Suarez: "It seems like you both want to be in the talent show together but you disagree about how much you need to practice. Maybe you could agree on a practice schedule that both of you could live with."

Raeshawn: "Okay. As long as it doesn't mean more today. I want to do something different."

Theresa: "Okay. Can we practice every day for half an hour?"

Try these conflict resolution techniques.

There are a number of conflict resolution techniques you can teach children. After practicing the techniques children will be able to use them on their own.

Storytelling—This technique can help children step back from the conflict so they can discuss the problem without feeling threatened. It is most effective with younger children. Retell what happened in the form of a story, "Sherrie and Wanda both wanted to try out the new computer program." Stop frequently to ask for input from the group. Encourage them to be very specific, "How could they both get what they wanted?" Include their suggestions in the story. If you use this technique with older children, ask them to tell the story from a third person point of view—as if it was happening to someone else. This helps children analyze the situation from another perspective.

Planning Time—This technique helps children use their problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts. It works well for minor disagreements, but is not effective when children are angry or upset. When children ask you to help them solve a problem direct them to a quiet spot and give them three minutes to work out the problem themselves. After three minutes ask the children if they have worked out a solution. If so, praise them and ask what it is. If not, use mediation, reflective listening, or another technique to help the children resolve the situation. In the overview section of the module, Ricky and Brad used planning time to solve their problem.

Role Playing—This technique allows children to reenact a situation in front of an audience so they can better understand their behavior. Begin by defining the conflict: give the time, describe the place, provide relevant background information, and state who was involved. Have the children involved, or volunteers, act out the conflict. If they get stuck, ask leading questions. Keep this part of the role play brief. At the point of the conflict freeze the action. Ask the audience to suggest ways to resolve the conflict. Have the players incorporate the suggestions they prefer and wrap up the role play. Discuss what happened, how the conflict could have been prevented, how the players felt, and other possible solutions.

You also can teach children this technique using sample conflicts, rather than real ones. Once they learn to role play, they can use the technique to resolve differences. Some children will not want to participate. Others may be willing to role play privately, but not with an audience.

Role Reversals—This technique helps children see a situation from another person's point of view. Begin the role play as described above by "setting the stage." Start the role play, then freeze it. Ask children to change roles and do the role play again, this time assuming the role of the other person. Stop the role play when the children seem to understand the other person's perspective. Discuss the role play and possible solutions.

Another popular technique for conflict resolution is described by Elizabeth Crary.[3] Known as SIGEP, this technique follows the six steps described below:

1. **Stop**. Have everyone involved in the conflict stop to regain composure and self-control so they can discuss the situation.
2. **Identify**. Encourage children to talk about why are upset. Ask questions such as:

   What was happening before your disagreement?

   How do you feel?

   What do you want to happen?

   What do you think the other people want?

   Ask children to be as specific as possible, "She gave herself extra money when she was banker," rather than, "She's a cheater." Observe children's body language and listen to their words.
3. **Generate**. Give everyone a chance to brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. Accept all ideas, without rejecting any as being too hard to implement, or too far fetched. Encourage children to use their creativity. Let them exhaust their suggestions before offering any of your own.
4. **Evaluate**. Consider the usefulness of all of the ideas generated by the children and staff. Have children think about whether an idea would work, is fair, and what might happen if they tried it. The children should agree to try one of the ideas. The others can be saved in case the first one doesn't solve the problem.

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[3] Based with permission on Elizabeth Crary, *Kids Can Cooperate* (Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, 1984), pp. 41-45.

5. **Plan**. Discuss how to carry out the decision. What needs to happen first? Can the children do it without adult help? How will they know if their decision worked?

Conflict resolution skills are used throughout our lives.

Teaching children how to resolve conflicts is an important part of your job. Children will use these skills throughout their lives in a variety of school, family, work, and social situations. By teaching conflict resolution skills, you can help make the program a more peaceful place. Children will learn to consider the views and feelings of others.

Applying Your Knowledge

During the next week conflicts are likely to arise at your program. When they do, use one or more of the conflict resolution techniques described in this learning activity to help children resolve their problem. After the situation is resolved describe the conflict and answer the questions on the form that follows. An example is provided.

Using Conflict Resolution Techniques

(Example)

The Conflict

Children involved/ages: *Polly (7 years) and Margo (8 years).*

What happened to cause the conflict?

Last week Margo let Polly use her pencil with the soccer ball eraser. Today Polly took the pencil out of Margo's cubby without asking permission.

How did the children handle (or mishandle) the conflict?

Margo saw Polly using the pencil. When she snatched the pencil from Polly, it broke in half.

The Technique

Describe the technique you used or taught to the children.

We used SIGEP to discuss and resolve the problem.

How did the children respond?

It helped defuse the situation. The girls were able to discuss their feelings and why they each felt justified. Polly said she thought it was okay to take the pencil without permission because last week Margo said they could take turns using it. Margo said she has a pencil collection and she likes to keep them in good condition, so she doesn't like other people using them. After solving the problem the girls made a poster so others could learn about SIGEP.

How was the conflict resolved?

Polly apologized to Margo and vice versa. Margo agreed to leave her special pencils at home or in her backpack because they are very important to her. Polly agreed to pay for half of a new pencil. She also promised to not take things from Margo's cubby in the future.

Would you use this technique with other children? Explain why or why not.

Yes. I plan to introduce it at a group meeting using a story about two children having a conflict. Then children can use it themselves if they find it helpful.

Using Conflict Resolution Techniques

The Conflict

Children involved/ages: ______________________________

What happened to cause the conflict?

____

____

How did the children handle (or mishandle) the conflict?

____

____

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The Technique

Describe the technique you used or taught to the children.

____

____

How did the children respond?

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How was the conflict resolved?

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Would you use this technique with other children? Explain why or why not.

____

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____

Discuss this activity with your trainer and your colleagues. Plan ways to use conflict resolution techniques as a regular part of your program.

Learning Activity V.

Involving Children in Setting Rules and Limits

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- involve the children in setting clear, simple rules and limits;
- communicate rules clearly to children; and
- enforce rules consistently.

It's easier to follow rules that are stated positively.

Rules and limits help both children and staff agree on what behaviors are acceptable. Both adults and children are more likely to accept and follow rules when they are stated in positive terms that describe what to do, rather than what not to do. For example, your program might have a rule about staff use of the telephone. How do the following two statements make you feel?

- You **may not** use the telephone for personal calls while on duty.
- You **may** use the telephone on breaks and for emergencies.

Most people would prefer the second statement because it tells you what you may do, rather than what you may not do. Human nature is such that we are more willing to comply with rules that are stated positively. When rules are stated negatively, we are likely to feel as though we have been accused. For example, upon hearing "You may not use the telephone for personal calls while on duty," someone might think, "Of course I wouldn't do that. I know it's not right to leave the children while I'm on duty. Whoever wrote this rule doesn't have any respect for me or my colleagues." Upon hearing, "You may use the phone on breaks and for emergencies," someone might think, "That's a reasonable rule. It gives a time when I can use the phone and acknowledges I wouldn't leave the children while I placed a personal call."

Simple rules tell children what they should do.

Children also need simple rules that tell them what they should do, rather than what they should not do. For example, "walk inside so you don't hurt yourself" rather than "don't run inside" tells children what they can do and why. There are many times during the day when you must remind children of the rules and limits. Children are more likely to internalize the rules when your reminders are worded positively and delivered in a brief and firm manner. For example:

- "Only one person can speak at a time" instead of "You can't all talk at once."
- "Use your words to tell others how you feel" instead of "No fighting."
- "Walk indoors" instead of "No running indoors."

Children feel safer when they know adults will enforce rules and limits consistently. These feelings of security tend to make children feel freer to explore and experiment.

Children can help create rules.

Children are likely to respect rules when they understand the reasons behind them. They also are more likely to follow rules they help create. When involving children in setting rules, talk to them about the consequences of actions. "What might happen if you go to the art room without signing out?" Children could come up with answers and also think of a rule. "Sign out when going to another room in the building. We need to know where you are in case something happens to you. You might get hurt and no one could help because they wouldn't know where to find you."

It's important to have just enough rules to keep the program functioning smoothly. When there are too many rules, children can't remember what to do. Too few rules might mean the children aren't safe and the environment is disorderly.

Review and revise rules as children grow and mature.

As children grow and mature, they can handle more freedom, more activities, and more responsibility. You need to observe carefully to see when individual children or the whole group can handle greater freedom. There is a fine line between keeping children safe and keeping them from having chances to grow and be independent. The limits set at the beginning of the year may need to be adjusted in a few months' time. It may be appropriate to have different rules depending on children's ages and abilities. For example, perhaps the younger children must be escorted back indoors from the playground, whereas older children can tell a staff member, then go in by themselves.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you use positive phrases to list your program's rules. Then you answer some questions about one of the rules. First read the example on the next page and then complete the blank forms that follow.

Rules for the School-Age Program

(Example)

Staying healthy and safe:

Wear a batting helmet when it's your turn at bat. Wash your hands before and after eating.

Respecting the rights of others:

Ask for permission before using other people's belongings. When you want to be alone, you can go to the quiet area.

Not hurting yourself or others:

Use your words to tell others how you feel. Climb the ladder to the loft one step at a time.

Caring for the equipment and materials:

Everyone helps at clean-up time. Use the arts and crafts materials in areas with washable floors.

Now select one of the rules or limits you listed and answer the following questions.

Rule: *Everyone helps at clean-up time*

Why do you have this rule?

Our program is set up so children can get materials themselves and put them back when they are finished. They like doing things on their own and learn self-discipline.

How do you make sure all adults apply the rule in the same way?

Adults and children work together at clean-up time. If there are problems with consistency, we talk about them after the children leave for school in the morning.

How do you follow through and support your words with actions?

If a child doesn't respond to the reminder, I walk over to the child. Then I get on the child's level and repeat the reminder: "It's clean-up time."

Give an example of a simple, clear statement that states the rule positively.

"There are five minutes until clean-up time. Finish your work, then start putting things away."

What might you say to respect and acknowledge a child's feelings?

"I know you aren't finished with your drawing. You can put it in your cubby until tomorrow."

How do you act with authority and show confidence?

I always give children a ten-minute warning, then a five-minute warning. I never apologize when I announce it's clean-up time. When a child is slow to stop playing, I walk over and restate it is clean-up time. I don't ask the child to clean up. I just say, "It's clean-up time."

Rules for the School-Age Program

Staying healthy and safe:

Respecting the rights of others:

Not hurting yourself or others:

Caring for our equipment and materials:

Discuss these rules with a colleague who also works in your program.

Now select one of the rules or limits you listed and answer the following questions.

Rule: ______________________________

Why do you have this rule?

____

____

____

How do you make sure all adults apply the rule in the same way?

____

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How do you follow through and support your words with actions?

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Give an example of a simple, clear statement that states the rule positively.

____

____

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What might you say to respect and acknowledge a child's feelings?

____

____

How do you act with authority and show confidence?

____

____

Discuss your answers with your trainer.

Learning Activity VI.
Responding to Challenging Behaviors

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- look for the reasons behind a child's challenging behavior; and
- develop a plan for responding to a challenging behavior.

Challenging behaviors occur again and again.

Challenging behaviors, such as repeatedly talking back to staff or being overly aggressive, are likely to occur again and again. This may mean something in the child's life is disturbing. The child doesn't know how to express his or her feelings appropriately, so he or she acts out.

There are usually reasons for children's behavior.

It's important to remember that, in most cases, there is a reason for the child's behavior. Perhaps a situation at home or at school is causing the child to be upset or frustrated; perhaps it's the environment at the school-age program. The program schedule, activities, or expectations may be inappropriate for this child. Some possible causes of challenging behaviors include the following:[4]

Children need more attention than they are getting. Children need to feel important and valued. Sometimes, when children don't receive enough positive attention, they act out to get negative attention. Their need for attention is so great they "misbehave" because it will get adults to notice them and spend time with them. Unfortunately, once they are successful in getting attention by misbehaving, they are likely to continue the unacceptable behavior until the cycle is broken.

They are affected by a physical condition. Health problems and conditions such as illness, allergies, disabilities, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, or hunger can contribute to children's misbehavior. Learning disabilities and conditions such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) can cause a child to have both academic and behavior problems. When a child frequently or consistently has difficulty behaving appropriately, the possibility of physical causes should be considered. Staff can discuss examples of the child's behavior with the parents and request the child be evaluated by the family physician.

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[4] Based with permission on Project ETC, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association and Portage Project, *Special Training for Special Needs; Module 5: Program Implementation* (Minneapolis: Portage Project, 1989).

They are feeling bored or confined. No matter how interesting and varied the activities are at the program, some children will be bored and feel like they would rather be somewhere else. It helps to make an extra effort to include such a child when planning program activities and starting new clubs.

They are seeking more control of the situation. Sometimes children have very few opportunities to make decisions or have control over their lives. Perhaps between home, school, and the school-age program there are too many rules and too few opportunities for children to choose what they want to do, what materials they want to use, and who they would like to play with. When children are able to make decisions they feel as though they have some control over their lives and they begin to develop self-discipline. For example, Kyle might not be allowed to decide whether or not he goes to the school-age program; however, he can choose what to do while at the program.

When a child repeatedly exhibits a challenging behavior over a long period of time, all the adults who care for the child need to discuss the possible causes of the problem. You can reassure the child's parents there are times when some children behave this way, but the behavior cannot be allowed at the school-age program. You can then agree on a plan for consistent responses to the behavior. It is very important to let the child know he or she is still loved and cared for, even if he or she has a challenging behavior.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you first think of a child in your program who has a challenging behavior. Describe the child's behavior and your response. Next, ask the child's parents if they would be willing to participate in this activity. Describe the activity and the behavior you will be observing. Stress that observation notes are always confidential. Then, talk with the parents to learn about the child's behavior at home and at school. Jointly develop a plan for responding to the behavior. Review the example on the next page, then complete the blank form that follows.

Responding to Challenging Behaviors
(Example)

Child: *Emily* **Age:** *9 years* **Date:** *October 16*

What behavior is challenging?

Emily has been stealing small items from the staff and from other children.

How often does this occur? How long has it been going on? When does it happen?

About once or twice a week. For two weeks. It seems to happen when Emily is angry or disappointed because she was left out of an activity.

How do you respond now?

We talk to Emily about the consequences of her actions—staff won't trust her, the other children won't want to play with her, she won't be able to participate in favorite activities.

How does the child respond?

She seems genuinely sorry for her behavior, and very embarrassed. She cries and says she knows it's wrong to steal. She promises she won't do it again.

Did something happen at the program that might have upset the child?

Recently Emily tried out for the lead in the play we are doing and didn't get it. She was very disappointed and kept asking why she wasn't chosen. She had a hard time understanding that the girl who was chosen gave a better performance during auditions. She was offered another part, but said she didn't want to be in the play after all.

Did something happen at home that might have upset the child?

Her parents can't think of anything, but Emily has stolen several small items from her older sister in the past few weeks. They thought Emily was going through a stage of normal sibling rivalry, even though Emily and her sister have always gotten along well.

Did something happen at school that might have upset the child?

Her parents checked with her teacher who said Emily has stolen a few items at school— an eraser from his desk, and a troll from another child. Each time Emily was confronted about stealing she returned the items and apologized.

Conclusion:

Emily may be retaliating for not being chosen for the lead in the play.

Plans for responding to this behavior:

I discussed the situation with my colleague who is helping the Drama Club with their play. He and I will meet with Emily to invite her to think again about taking another part in the play. Her parents and the staff at the program will continue to talk weekly to discuss her progress. We'll continue to use positive guidance techniques to guide her behavior. We will make it a point to give her a lot of positive reinforcement.

What happened when you tried out your plans? Has the behavior changed or gone away?

Emily agreed to take another part in the play. Her behavior has improved dramatically. Her parents say she has been talking about the play a lot and is having fewer problems in school.

Responding to Challenging Behaviors

Child: ______ **Age:** ______ **Date:** ______

What behavior is challenging?

How often does this occur? How long has it been going on? When does it happen?

How do you respond now?

How does the child respond?

Did something happen at the program that might have upset the child?

Did something happen at home that might have upset the child?

Did something happen at school that might have upset the child?

Conclusion:

Plans for responding to this behavior:

What happened when you tried out your plans? Has the behavior changed or gone away?

Discuss this activity with your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills for guiding children's behavior. Before you go on, take a few minutes to summarize what you've learned.

- Turn back to Learning Activity I, Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Guide Behavior, and add specific examples of what you learned about helping children develop self-discipline while you were working on this module to the charts. Compare your ideas to those in the completed charts at the end of the module.
- Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Guiding Children's Behavior

Providing an Environment That Encourages Children's Self-Discipline

1. How did Ms. Mingus demonstrate respect for the children?

a. She gave Katy an opportunity to explain why she thought the program needed new games.

b. She handled the situation as a "storage problem" rather than accusing the children of being careless with the games.

2. How did Ms. Mingus encourage children's self-discipline?

a. She asked for volunteers to help organize the games.

b. She asked the children what supplies they needed, then told them where to find them.

c. She asked the children to think of better ways to store the games.

Using Positive Methods to Guide Individual Children

1. How did Ms. Anton know Kendall was upset?

a. She knew it was unusual for Kendall to be the last off the bus.

b. She heard Kendall complaining to herself about the cubbies.

c. She knew it was unusual for Kendall to be quiet during a club meeting.

2. How did Ms. Anton's guidance help Kendall learn self-discipline?

a. She accepted Kendall's feelings.

b. She offered to work with Kendall to plan a homework schedule.

c. She taught Kendall a skill—doing a schedule—the child can use in the future without adult assistance.

Helping Children Understand and Express Their Feelings in Acceptable Ways

1. **Why did Mr. Franklin suggest the boys sit down on the couch to discuss their problem?**

   Sitting on the couch removed the boys from the source of their problem so they could discuss it more calmly.

2. **How did Mr. Franklin help the boys express their feelings in acceptable ways?**

   a. He taught them a conflict resolution technique they could use to solve this problem and other problems that might arise in the future.

   b. He let them know he was confident they could solve their own problem, but would help if he was needed.

Understanding and Responding to 5- to 7-Year-Old Children

What 5- to 7-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They can think through problems in their minds.	When children disagree, encourage them to use their thinking skills to resolve their differences. Ask open-ended questions to extend their thinking—"What might happen if...?" "What other ways could you do that...?" Give children plenty of time to think through problems on their own. For example, when two children decide to play a board game, watch as they discuss the rules rather than stepping in to explain them.
They may still have difficulty sharing and taking turns.	Provide duplicates of popular items and materials so children don't have to wait too long to join in a favorite activity. Set up systems for taking turns and help children find something to do while waiting.
They may have difficulty controlling their behavior in group situations.	Have appropriate expectations for the amount of time children of this age can spend in large groups. Offer opportunities for children to participate in activities in small groups—for example, two or three children can play catch rather than joining a large group playing softball. Observe to see when children need to leave the group to spend time alone or just with a few others.
They like teamwork and following rules. They may disagree about what rules say and what is "fair." They may make up games with rules and routines.	Stock up on a variety of board games such as Connect Four, Boggle, Pictionary, and Scrabble for Juniors. Introduce new games by reading the directions out loud with the children. Offer to play the game with the children the first time. If they accept the offer, stop frequently to ask the children if you are following the rules. Provide materials children can use to make games, have them write down rules they have agreed on or dictate them to an older child or staff member. Respect their invented games, rules, and routines as long as they are safe and don't hurt anyone's feelings.
They become more and more independent.	Involve children in the program's routines, according to their abilities. Give children increasing responsibility and more difficult tasks as they develop new skills. Allow children to do as much as possible for themselves—making snacks, selecting activities, storing their belongings.
They may hide their feelings, fears, and worries from adults.	Encourage children to express their feelings through writing, dramatic play, and art work. Provide books about feelings, fears, and worries and use them as discussion starters. Be available to listen when children are ready to share with you.

Understanding and Responding to 8- to 10-Year-Old Children

What 8- to 10-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They expand and use their reasoning skills to solve problems, negotiate, and compromise with peers.	Teach children to use conflict resolution as a way to work through problems. When children try to get you to solve their differences, encourage them to assume responsibility for resolving their differences. Model techniques such as negotiation and compromise as you work with children.
They develop their own games with complicated rules and may fight when they think someone has broken the rules.	Provide materials for making up board games. To avoid misunderstandings, suggest they write down the rules. When children make up an outdoor game, ask them to explain the game and the rules to you. This may help if you are later asked to mediate a disagreement. Suggest children make up new ways to play popular games.
They learn to express their anger and frustration in acceptable ways.	Praise children when they use self-control. Provide outlets—clay, art materials, a quiet place to get away, soft music and earphones—for reducing stress, so children don't become overwhelmed by anger and frustration.
They learn to use good judgment.	Compliment children when you notice them using good judgment. "That was a good idea to put the gerbil back in his cage when he started squirming. It would have been difficult to catch him if he wiggled out of your hands."
They learn to accept responsibility for their actions.	Encourage children to pick up after themselves and clean up spills. Also, when their behavior hurts another child (either physically or emotionally), talk about how they might behave differently in the future. Encourage children to make amends for their actions.
They do more and more on their own, without adult supervision and direction.	Encourage children to make choices, form clubs, and lead meetings. Recognize and value what makes them unique—special talents, skills, achievements. Let them know the special things about them you value—the way they include a younger child in their play or their perseverance when they are having trouble with a homework assignment. Respect their need to keep some "secrets" from adults.

Understanding and Responding to 11- to 12-Year-Old Children

What 11- to 12-Year-Old Children are Like	How Staff Can Use This Information to Promote Self-Discipline
They are able to negotiate, compromise, and solve problems.	Teach children how to present and support their opinions when they differ with those of a friend. Help them learn to listen to another person's point of view.
They may test program rules and adult authority and talk back to staff members.	Recognize it is normal for children in this age group to test rules and challenge adults. When they do break program rules, discuss the incident with them and help them accept the consequences.
They want to be accepted by their peers, to be a member of the group.	Encourage children to recognize their own values and stick to them even when their peers want them to do something different.
They may be in a hurry to grow up and may mimic teenage behaviors.	Help children feel good about themselves at their current age. Allow them plenty of responsibility and independence so they don't feel like little kids. Try to accept the harmless imitations and ignore those that can be annoying at times, such as using slang or talking about music all the time.
They may have their judgment tested by strong peer group influences.	Discuss with children how they feel when pressured by their peers to do things they know are not appropriate, such as using drugs or alcohol. Help children practice responses that express their feelings: "I want to keep my body in good health because I am an athlete." "I know a kid who tried that once and it made her really sick so I don't want to do it." "No thanks."
They may use "swear" words to be "cool." These words are generally used in daily conversations with peers rather than in anger.	Make it very clear that swearing is not allowed at the program, and specify the consequences. Remember children of this age use swear words to feel like a part of their peer group, not because they are "bad."
They may test the limits of their physical skills.	Be sure the equipment and materials used by the younger children is sturdy enough to support the older ones. Agree on rules to keep everyone safe. For example, the loft may be reserved for older children at certain times and younger ones other times. Make sure the program's equipment is sized appropriately for older children.
They are beginning to think in abstract terms; they can think about the consequences of their actions.	Encourage children to think through their plans before carrying them out. Ask open-ended questions such as "What might happen if you do that?" "Is there another way you could handle that situation?"

Creating an Environment That Promotes Self-Discipline

Children's Behavior	Possible Problems in the Environment	How You Might Change the Environment
Children accuse each other of cheating when playing board games.	The games are too difficult or children don't know how to play them. The written rules are lost. Staff or other children may give too much attention to the "winners."	Ask for volunteers to make sure there are copies of the rules for each board game. Play the games with children until they understand the rules. Ask children to explain the rules to you to make sure they know how to play the game. Suggest changing the rules if needed to make the game easier to play. Avoid focusing on winning the game.
Children get into fights when they can't use a material or piece of equipment.	There are no duplicates of favorite items—particularly those that are popular with the younger children. There is no system for taking turns or sharing limited resources.	Ask the program to purchase extras of popular items. Work with children to set up a system for taking turns and to restrict use of resources in limited supply. For example, children can cut the tissue paper in half when they need only a small piece. Make a note to order a larger supply of resources that are used up quickly or are most popular.
Children begin projects but do not finish them.	The projects are not really of interest to children. They are bored with the interest areas and other activities.	Assess children's interests through conversations, a written survey, or several small group meetings. Involve children in creating new interest areas that respond to the survey results.

Creating an Environment That Promotes Self-Discipline

(continued)

Children's Behavior	Possible Problems in the Environment	How You Might Change the Environment
Children make fun of others because something about them is different.	Children have not learned to value what makes each person unique. The program atmosphere may emphasize competitiveness rather than cooperation.	Provide materials—books, games, pictures, records—that reflect the children's diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Provide opportunities for children to share their special hobbies and interests—what makes each person unique. Keep track of the times competition is a part of program activities. Strive to minimize competition and include more opportunities for children to cooperate as they play a game or complete a project.
Children can't find their belongings when it's time to go home.	Children don't have individual cubbies, or they are located too far from the entrance. Children are not expected to help take care of the program's materials.	Provide individual cubbies or storage areas for each child located near the entrance. Let children know they are expected to care for the program's materials and their own belongings. Store materials in labeled containers and make sure children can reach the shelves or cupboards.

GLOSSARY

Challenging behavior	Behavior such as talking back to adults, swearing, or being overly aggressive that occurs again and again and is often difficult to handle.
Consequence	The natural or logical result of a behavior.
Discipline	The actions that adults take to guide and direct children toward acceptable behavior.
Limits and rules	Guidelines set jointly by staff members and children as to what are acceptable behaviors.
Positive guidance	Techniques that help children learn to behave in acceptable ways. These methods help children develop self-discipline.
Punishment	Control of children's behavior by use of fear.
Self-discipline	The ability to control one's own behavior.

Module 11:

FAMILIES

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OVERVIEW

WORKING WITH FAMILIES INVOLVES:

- communicating with parents often to exchange information about their child at home and at the program;
- offering a variety of ways for parents to participate in their child's life at the program; and
- providing support to families.

School-age staff and parents work as a team.

Recent studies have shown that the most effective programs for children are those which actively promote and encourage the involvement of families. School-age staff are in a unique position with children and families. Like teachers, you see children daily and have ready access to their parents. Over a period of time you are likely to have more contacts with families than any other professional. Your position allows you to support families and help children and their parents maintain close relationships. Good working relationships with families enable school-age staff to be more responsive to each child's needs. When parents* and staff work as a team, they can share information and discuss ways to provide consistent care at home and at the program.

No matter how much time children spend outside their homes—at school, at the school-age program, playing sports, or engaged in other activities—their parents are the most important people in their lives. Parents can teach you a lot about their children—what they like to do, what they don't enjoy, things they do well, skills they are developing. It is important to share similar information with parents on a regular basis. In this way parents can feel connected to their children's lives at the program and become knowledgeable consumers who value the quality of your program.

Some parents may not show any interest in becoming involved in the program. They may feel uncomfortable with you and the other staff, or they may simply be too busy. Parents who are already actively involved in their children's school and community activities, may not have additional time to devote to the school-age program. You may be able to think of some innovative ways to involve these families; however, there will always be some families who prefer to keep their involvement to a minimum.

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* In this module, "parents" refers to the adult members of a household who nurture and care for a child.

Most parents are interested in their children's activities.

Working with families is often a very rewarding part of your job. Most parents are concerned about their children and want to do what's best for them. Let them know you share their concern and want to provide a program that meets children's needs and allows them to grow and learn. Make sure they know you enjoy working with their child and share their excitement when their child cooks dinner, learns to play chess, receives a sports award, or is recognized for school achievement.

School-age staff work with families in a variety of ways. Conversations with parents are opportunities to get to know each other and to exchange information about a child's activities at home and at the program. Parents should always be welcome at the program. For those who cannot visit during the day, you can provide a variety of other ways for them to participate.

Often parents have questions about what their child does at the program and who he or she plays with most often. They may ask you about a stage their child is going through or how to respond to a frustrating or confusing behavior. You can respond to these requests by drawing on your own experience, or you can refer parents to books or other resources on school-age children.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in working with families.

Communicating With Parents Often to Exchange Information About Their Child at Home and at the Program

Encourage parents to drop in at the program at any time. "We're looking forward to your visit tomorrow afternoon, Mr. Kendricks. We're all eager to see the slides you took on our camping trip."

Learn each parent's name and something about them as a way to build trust. "I thought of you last night, Mr. Parker, when I watched the television special on New Mexico. That's where your family lives, isn't it?"

Share interesting, positive information about children's activities at the program, verbally or in writing. "Dear Ms. Stanon: Jared learned how to weave this week. He's making a scarf using lots of colors and a unique pattern he created."

Ask parents about their children's interests and use the information to individualize the program. "This magazine has an article about ice dancing. Your mom told me you really like to watch the skaters on television."

Give parents information about a younger child's routines. "Mary wasn't very hungry at snack. She said she ate a big lunch at kindergarten. She may be extra hungry at dinner tonight."

Respond to parents' questions and concerns. "If you think Graham needs more physical activity we can encourage him to play group games or try running with the Jogging Club."

Share information about yourself with parents to help them get to know you. "I'm taking courses so I can be a physical education teacher one day. In the meantime I share my love for sports with the children at the program."

Hold regular parent-staff conferences to share information about children's progress and to plan for the future. "Ms. Wendell, it's been six months since our last conference, so it's time to schedule another one. Here's a planning form to help you think about what you want to discuss. Tomorrow you can give me some times that would be good for both you and your partner."

Use a variety of communication strategies such as newsletters, bulletin boards, handbooks, message centers, phone calls, and notes home. "Hello, Ms. Stratton. This is Jennie from the school-age program. Is this a convenient time to talk?"

Suggest ways to coordinate a child's program and home experiences. "Mark has been very interested in our cooking activities. He might want to prepare a special dish at home so the whole family can enjoy one of his creations."

Offering a Variety of Ways for Parents to Participate in Their Child's Life at the Program

Let parents know their contributions and visits are appreciated. "Ms. Nelson, we're pleased you came by today. It was a nice surprise for Jimmy when you spent an hour with the group."

Give parents opportunities to make decisions about their child's activities. "Daniel seems really interested in learning to skate. Do you think he'd like us to offer an opportunity to go ice skating?"

Survey parents' needs and offer appropriate workshops and resources. "Many of the parents want to know more about how to help children express their feelings without losing their tempers, so we're having a workshop next month."

Offer a variety of parent involvement options to accommodate different schedules, interests, and skills. "Thanks so much for typing this month's newsletter for us, Ms. Peterson."

Hold regularly scheduled parent meetings and informal family events at times that are convenient for most parents. "Ms. Hanes, you'll be pleased to know that most of the other parents also preferred to have our next meeting on a Saturday. We'll arrange to have parking available. I think we'll get a large turnout."

Provide an orientation for new parents so they can get to know staff and learn what children do at the program. "First, we're going to see a slide show created by the children to show parents what they do here. We think it really captures the spirit of this program. Then we'll introduce the staff and answer your questions."

Involve parents in making decisions about the program. "Dear Parents: It's time for our annual program planning process. Please join us for a pizza dinner and planning meeting next Wednesday, right after the program closes for the day. Your children are welcome to join us, too."

Providing Support to Families

Maintain confidentiality about children and families. "Thank you for sharing this information with me. With your permission I will share it with the director. You can be assured we will not let it go any further."

Provide information on child development to help parents understand what behaviors are typical of school-age children. "Like many six-year-olds, Jody prefers playing non-competitive games that don't have winners or losers."

Work with parents to help them develop their own strategies for handling a difficult behavior. "Thanks for letting us know about Jimmy's tendency to get into arguments with his grandfather. Many preadolescents go through a stage when they like to argue with adults about what's fair. How can we work together to help Jimmy express his views without being disrespectful?"

Recognize when families are under stress and offer additional support. "It's often hard to meet children's needs when one parent is in the hospital. We'll help Sherrie as much as we can at the program."

Introduce parents to others who live in the same neighborhood or have children of similar ages. "Ms. Marcetti, I'm glad to see you. I want to introduce you to the Purnells. They live near you and your children spend a lot of time together at the program."

Make an effort to get to know all the parents in the program. "David has been coming to the program for three weeks, but I still haven't met his grandmother. She drops him off in the morning before I arrive and he takes the bus home. Tomorrow I'm going to come a little early so I can be sure to meet her."

Notify a supervisor when it seems a parent needs professional help. "Ms. Grimaldi, do you have a few minutes to talk? I've had several disturbing conversations with Mr. Jackson and need to discuss them with you."

Working With Families

In the following situations, school-age staff are working with families. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Communicating with Parents Often to Exchange Information About Their Child at Home and at the Program

Nine-year-old Molly joined the program a month ago. She is a bit shy and has spent much of her time at the program working and playing by herself. Ms. Kee and Molly's parents, the Morans, have been sharing information about Molly's progress in making new friends. Molly loves to write stories and plays at home. Last week she told Ms. Kee she had finished writing a play and wanted to put on a show for others at the program. Ms. Kee helped her find several children who wanted to work on the play. The children met several times this week to practice. Molly seemed happy her play was being performed and that she was making new friends. Ms. Kee knew the Morans would be pleased with their child's progress. She decided not to say anything directly about Molly's accomplishments. Instead, she invited Ms. Moran to come a few minutes early one afternoon so she could see Molly in action. Today, Ms. Moran arrives in time to watch the last half of the rehearsal. She smiles at Ms. Kee and says, "What a relief to see Molly having such a good time with the other children!" Ms. Kee nods in agreement and says, "Yes, Molly has made some good friends. I'll keep looking for ways to help her stay actively involved in the program."

1. **Why did Ms. Kee think it was important for Molly's mother to visit the program?**

2. **What other kinds of information will Ms. Kee and the Morans need to share, now that Molly is making friends?**

Offering a Variety of Ways for Parents to Participate in Their Child's Life at the Program

When Mr. Bradley comes to pick up six-year-old Jerry at the end of the day, he approaches Ms. Williams and asks, "How can I be more involved in the program? I've had to work a late shift recently, so I've missed the family nights. Jerry seems very disappointed that I don't know what's going on at the program. Can you think of something I could do so Jerry will know I'm interested in what he does here?" Ms. Williams asks Mr. Bradley several questions about his work and other interests. Then she says, "Jerry and the other children who come here after kindergarten have been asking when they can play with the wooden trucks again. The trucks are broken, and we haven't had time to get them fixed. From what you tell me, it sounds as if you're really good at fixing things. You could take them home, and you and Jerry could repair them together and then bring them back. Every time Jerry and his friends play with the trucks, they will be reminded you made them work again." After looking over the trucks Mr. Bradley says, "This is an easy fix-it job. And it would be great to include Jerry in doing something for the program. Thanks for the idea. We'll take the trucks home today and have them back soon." As Ms. Williams helps Jerry and his dad collect the trucks she says, "I'm sure there are other parents who've missed our family nights because they had to work. We have to schedule meetings at different times so more parents can attend."

1. How did Ms. Williams help Mr. Bradley think of a way to be involved with the program and show Jerry he was interested?

2. What did Ms. Williams learn from Mr. Bradley?

Providing Support to Families

"I just don't know what to do," says Ms. Thomas when she drops off 11-year-old Maria one morning. "Maria says she's too old to come here and wants me to let her stay home by herself. She doesn't want to be around the little kids and wants to spend more time painting. She takes a class every Saturday and doesn't have time in between to practice what she's learned. I'm not sure she's ready to be home alone. Do you have any suggestions?" Mr. Lopez says, "I'm glad you shared that with me. Lately, Maria has seemed ready for more independence. I had planned to talk with her today about what she would like to do at the program. I understand your concern about having Maria stay home alone. We'll try to make some adjustments to give her more opportunities to work on her special interests at the program." Ms. Thomas is relieved and says, "I'm glad you're willing to make some changes to help Maria feel better about coming here. Can we talk again in a few days to see how you think she's responding to the changes?" Mr. Lopez thinks this is a good idea and says, "Why don't we meet next week? We can share some ideas about ways to help Maria feel good about herself at home and here as she becomes more independent." Ms. Thomas nods in agreement and leaves looking a lot less concerned.

1. **What did Mr. Lopez do to help Ms. Thomas understand Maria's behavior?**

2. **What does Mr. Lopez plan to do to help Ms. Thomas understand and respond to Maria's growing need for independence?**

Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Your Own Family Experiences

What is a family?

School-age staff bring many firsthand experiences to their role in working with families. Most of us grew up in a family. Some of us are now raising families of our own or have grown children. Our own experiences influence how we view families, what we think a family should look like, and how parents should raise their children.

Think for a moment about what the word "family" means to you. Do you think of a mother and father and one or more children living together? Or, do you think of different kinds of family relationships?

Parenting can be a difficult job.

The families of the children you work with may resemble your own, or they may be very different. Children may be growing up with a single mother or father or with a stepparent. They may live with several relatives—their mother, a grandmother, an aunt and her children—or they may live with a grandparent who has legal custody. A family might include children, a parent, and his or her partner—of the same or different gender. In short, the traditional view of a family does not always hold true today.

In addition to families "looking" different, many families today are experiencing multiple sources of stress that can make parenting a very difficult job. In "family-friendly" communities, resources are dedicated to services such as parks and recreation, housing, public transportation, health care, adult education, and job training. In less affluent communities these services may be unavailable or inadequate. Families must make do with substandard housing, limited transportation, and health care systems that do not meet their needs. This lack of supportive services, accompanied by stressors such as violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and poverty, can challenge the innate resources of any family.

It is not uncommon for staff to blame parents when their children are having problems. This is especially true when staff see parents who don't behave toward their children as the staff think they should. If you have difficulty accepting the behaviors and life-style of some of the children and families in your program, it would be helpful to examine the source of your negative reactions. Are you comparing families to your own? Do you think "good" parents manage their lives so someone will be home with their school-age children? Do you expect children's families to conform to your own personal values? Are you willing to learn about different parenting styles? It may help to remember that all parents want the best for their children, and they are probably trying as hard as they can to be good parents. They too are guided by their own experiences growing up in a family.

Before you begin the learning activities in this module, spend a few minutes thinking of how your own views and experiences may affect the way you work with families. Consider the following questions:

Whom do you consider to be part of the family in which you grew up?

How are the families of the children in your program different from your own family?

What pressures do parents have today that your parents didn't experience?

What pressures are the same?

How do you think your own views and experiences as a family member affect your work with other families?

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. There is no glossary for this module.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use in their work with families. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Communicating With Parents Often to Exchange Information About Their Child at Home and at the Program		**I Do This**	
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Learning the names of all parents and something about them to build trust.	☐	☐	☐
2. Sharing information about yourself with parents to help them get to know you.	☐	☐	☐
3. Sharing interesting, positive information about children's activities at the program.	☐	☐	☐
4. Encouraging parents to visit the program at any time.	☐	☐	☐
5. Suggesting ways to coordinate the child's program and home experiences.	☐	☐	☐
6. Asking parents to share information about their child's interests and using this information to individualize the program.	☐	☐	☐
7. Holding parent-staff conferences to share information about each child's progress and to make plans for the future.	☐	☐	☐
8. Using a variety of communication strategies, for example, newsletters, bulletin boards, handbooks, message centers, phone calls, and notes home.	☐	☐	☐
9. Responding to parents' questions and concerns.	☐	☐	☐
10. Giving parents information about a younger child's routines (eating, toileting, resting).	☐	☐	☐

Offering a Variety of Ways for Parents to Participate in Their Child's Life at the Program	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
11. Involving parents in making decisions about their child's activities at the program.	☐	☐	☐
12. Letting parents know their contributions are appreciated.	☐	☐	☐
13. Surveying parents' needs and interests and providing appropriate workshops and resources.	☐	☐	☐
14. Offering a variety of ways to participate in the program to accommodate parents' varied schedules, interests, and unique skills.	☐	☐	☐
15. Holding regularly scheduled parent meetings and informal family events at times that are convenient for most parents.	☐	☐	☐
16. Providing an orientation for new parents so they can get to know staff and learn what children do each day.	☐	☐	☐
Providing Support to Families			
17. Maintaining confidentiality about all children and families.	☐	☐	☐
18. Providing information on child development to help parents understand what behaviors are typical of school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
19. Working with parents to help them develop their own strategies for handling a difficult behavior.	☐	☐	☐
20. Recognizing when families are under stress and offering additional support.	☐	☐	☐
21. Introducing parents to others who live in the same neighborhood or have children of similar ages.	☐	☐	☐
22. Making an effort to get to know all the parents in the program.	☐	☐	☐
23. Notifying a supervisor when it seems parents need professional help.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 11, Families.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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II. Keeping Parents Informed About the Program 276
III. Providing Ways for Parents to Be Involved 282
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Learning Activity I.

Developing a Partnership with Parents

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- work with parents to share information about each child; and
- develop and maintain a partnership with parents.

Strong partnerships benefit everyone.

High-quality school-age programs depend on a strong partnership between staff and parents. This partnership must be based on respect, trust, and the understanding that the child's experiences will be enhanced when all the adults who care for him or her work together.

A strong partnership between parents and staff benefits everyone involved. Parents feel reassured about their parenting skills. Staff also feel confident about their role, and they learn more about providing a program based on their own and the parents' understanding of the child. Children feel more secure knowing that both their parents and the school-age staff are people who care about them and are supportive.

Developing a partnership may take a lot of work. Sometimes staff members and parents have different views on childrearing. They may even have different ideas about the child's strengths, interests, and needs. Parents and staff may not always understand each other's point of view and may disagree about how to solve a problem. What they almost always have in common, though, is genuine concern for the child's well-being.

Although both staff and parents know a lot about a particular child, this knowledge and information needs to be combined to create a total picture. Here are some examples of the kinds of information each half of the partnership can provide.

Parents have a lot of information to share.

Parents have information about the following areas in a child's life:

Health history. "If you need any more information about Ben's asthma, please let us know. We want to work with you to protect his health and provide an appropriate level of activities."

Relationships with other family members. "Carla really enjoys being with her older brother. Every morning they eat together and talk about their plans for the day."

Ways the child likes to relax. "When Yancey is tired, he likes to sit by himself and read."

Foods the child enjoys. "Kristin made her own pizza last night. She sure has some creative ideas about toppings!"

Foods the child can or cannot eat. "Drew is allergic to all kinds of nuts."

The child's reaction to new people and situations. "Marsha has always been very outgoing. She can be a little overwhelming until you get to know her."

The child's reaction to changes in routines. "Sonia gets very upset if I ask her to dress before breakfast. She likes to eat first, then get dressed."

The child's activity level. "Leah has lots of energy and likes to participate in games where she can keep moving. But if she doesn't take a break once in a while, she can get over excited."

The child's reaction when things aren't going well. "Jason loves gymnastics, but sometimes he gets frustrated easily and may lose his temper if he makes a mistake."

The child's sensitivity to his or her environment. "Ben gets upset when there's a lot going on around him; he can't concentrate on what he's doing."

The child's favorite activities at home. "Travis spends hours shooting baskets outdoors on the weekends. He hates having to come in when it's too dark to see the hoop."

The child's fears. "Darrell is afraid of heights. We're not sure why, but he refuses to use climbers and slides because he thinks he will fall."

What the child did last night, over the weekend, or on vacation. "We went to the beach for our vacation. Haki collected buckets full of shells."

Who the child plays with at home. "Our 13-year-old neighbor and Roxanne like to play together. Roxanne idolizes her and wants to act and dress just like her."

The family's lifestyle. "We like to get outdoors as much as possible. Peter likes to go hiking in the mountains."

How the child "used to be" as well as how the child is now. "When Julie was 8, she really enjoyed doing art projects. Now that she's 9, she just wants to be with her friends, no matter what they are doing."

Staff know about the child's experiences at the program.

School-age staff have information about the following areas in a child's life:

Favorite play materials and activities. "When Tanya arrives each morning, she goes right to the blocks. She has fun making complicated buildings with turrets and balconies."

Which games and materials are too frustrating. "Jamal isn't ready to play chess yet, but he enjoys checkers and did well in the program's tournament."

What challenges the child enjoys. "Arnie is really excited about making paper airplanes. He used the paper airplane design book to make one that flies longer distances."

How the child plays with others. "Janna likes to watch for a while before she joins in with the other children."

How the child reacts to changes in the environment. "When we put out new tapes and CDs, Elena is usually the first to listen to them."

How the child tells others what he or she is feeling. "When Carmela is angry with another child, she says, 'I don't like you. You're not my friend.'"

What the child talks about at the program. "Today, Carlos talked about going to see his cousin, Louis. He's very excited about it."

What the child does upon arrival at the program after school. Jorge goes over to watch the gerbils when he comes in after school. He likes to have some quiet time by himself when he arrives."

Establishing the Partnership

Your relationship with a child's parents begins when their child first enters the program. Although the parents probably don't know you, you are the person who will be with their child for several hours each day, five days a week. It is natural for them to want to learn as much as they can about you, the program, the other children, and the program's activities. Share this information and tell them something about yourself. Let them know what you are like and why you enjoy working with children. Describe a typical day, both before and after school, and give parents a copy of the daily and weekly schedules. You might want to create a "get acquainted" bulletin board featuring pictures of the staff along with brief descriptions of their backgrounds, interests, and special skills.

Begin to get to know the parents, too. Find out their interests, what kind of work they do, how they feel about their child attending the program, and what stress they may be handling. Let them know how you will work with them to share information about their child. Explain that their involvement is welcomed as you make decisions about the child's activities at the program.

Let parents know you appreciate and respect their child.

At first, you and the parents will get to know each other through brief conversations at the program, or perhaps on the phone. Be friendly and respectful; always greet each parent by name. Share interesting, positive information about their child's experiences. Let them know by your attitude and tone of voice that their child is appreciated and well-supervised: "Sean had an active day today. He and his friends practiced a song for the talent show, he read a story to some of the younger children, and he played basketball in the gym." These communications build trust and acceptance, which will lead to a stronger partnership.

If parents don't respond to your efforts to establish a partnership, try to put yourself in their place. Try to understand their feelings about leaving their child at the program. Some parents are concerned about not spending as much time with their children as they would like. It's helpful to think about your own feelings about the parents and how you may be conveying these through your tone of voice, facial expressions, or the kinds of information you share.

Although you do many things with children that parents also do (such as providing guidance or making snack), your role is not the same as that of the parents. Always remember parents need your support, but they don't need you to take over their role.

Maintaining a Strong Relationship

Once a trusting relationship has been established, you need to continue to involve parents in their children's experiences at the program. The partnership is strengthened by continued communication and appreciation for each partner's role in encouraging the child's learning and development. The partnership also grows when both parents and staff can see how the child benefits from their teamwork. "Janine seems to enjoy the whole afternoon much more since she started eating snack as soon as she arrives. Thank you for letting us know her stomach starts to growl like clockwork at 3:30! It's hard for anyone to get involved if they're really hungry."

Some suggestions for maintaining a strong partnership follow.

Try these suggestions.

Respond to parents' concerns or questions even though they may seem trivial. Such concerns are important to the parents and therefore should be acknowledged. "I know you want Sam to do well in school. Perhaps we could sit down with him and agree on a plan for when he will do his homework. Some of the children do their homework as soon as they arrive, but others need to take a break first. They actually find it easier to focus and do a better job on their assignments after they have done something physical or creative. The staff help the children remember when it's time to get started."

Help parents focus on their child's accomplishments instead of comparing their child to others the same age. "Denise is really good at heading off arguments among her friends. All the staff are impressed by her negotiating skills."

Help children and parents feel good about belonging to the same family. "Ms. Bradley, Jerry was really pleased you came on our field trip to the science museum. He really liked it when the other kids talked about being in your group."

Wait until you are asked before offering advice. When you are asked, be clear about what is fact and what is opinion. "At the training session I went to last week, I learned about how important it is for 10- and 11-year-olds to spend time with their friends. The social skills they develop by hanging out with their buddies help them throughout their lives."

Share problems when you need to work together to help the child. "Erica frequently lashes out at children when she gets angry and says things that are hurtful. When can we meet to discuss ways to help her deal with her feelings?"

Acknowledge events and transitions in the families' lives. "Congratulations on your promotion! Lavonne told me the whole family had a party to celebrate."

Be sensitive to normal guilt feelings parents may have about the time their children spend at the program. Be careful not to make assumptions about parents or judge them because their lifestyle is different from yours.

Keep in touch when the child is absent or ill. "Hello, Ms. Carson, how is Paula feeling today?"

Help families cope when one parent is away. Suggest sending art, photographs, letters, tapes, or stories to the parent who is away. Remind children that their parents are thinking about them even when they are gone.

Maintain confidentiality when parents share something private with you. "I'm glad you told me about this. It will help me work with Brian. Don't worry about my telling someone else. I understand this is confidential."

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you focus on strengthening your partnership with the parents of one of the children in the program. Select a family with whom you feel comfortable but whom you would like to know better. Let the parents know you have selected them, and ask for their written permission to participate in this learning activity. Then, for two weeks, record your daily communications—any information you each share. At the same time, look for any changes in how you respond to this child. Read the shortened example that follows; then begin the activity.

Parent-Staff Communication Record

(Example)

Child/age: *Michael, 9 years* **Length of enrollment:** *3 months*

Parents: *Karen Parker and Frank Anderson*

Dates: *November 6-20*

Day One

A.M. *Greeted Ms. Parker and reminded her I was starting this activity. She told me Michael is excited about using the new woodworking tools.*

P.M. *Mr. Anderson came to pick up Michael. I told him Michael and his friend Joel used the new woodworking tools. They're trying to think of something to build together. He asked me about this learning activity (Michael's mother had described it) and wished me luck.*

Day Two

A.M. *When Mr. Anderson brought Michael, he said carpentry was his hobby and he and Michael had spent the evening drawing plans for a bird feeder the boys could build. He offered to pick up some wood and bring it tomorrow morning. I thanked him and told him several children were interested in observing birds. It would be great to have a bird feeder to encourage the birds to gather near our windows. Father and son both seemed pleased.*

P.M. *Ms. Parker picked up Michael. She told me Michael would be leaving early on Friday because they are picking up his Uncle Dennis at the airport. Michael is excited about seeing his uncle, who is a scuba diver. He often brings slides of unusual underwater creatures he has seen on his dives. I asked if she thought Michael might be interested in learning more about marine life before his uncle came to visit. She said, "Yes, I think he would like to impress Uncle Dennis!" I told her about Dolphin Log, a magazine on underwater life the program gets. I said Michael might like to borrow the latest issue for a few days. She asked Michael if he would like to borrow the magazine. He smiled and nodded his head. Ms. Parker thanked me while Michael signed out the magazine.*

First Weekly Summary

(Example)

Information you shared:

I'm doing this learning activity.

Michael and his friend Joel have been trying out the new woodworking tools.

Michael and Joel want to make something together.

Some of the other children are interested in birdwatching, and it would help to have a birdfeeder.

We subscribe to a magazine about marine life Michael might enjoy reading.

Information parents shared:

Mr. Anderson's hobby is carpentry, and he helps Michael design woodworking projects.

Michael is excited because his uncle, a scuba diver, is coming to visit.

Michael wants to learn more about underwater life.

How has the partnership helped you work with this child?

I know about Michael's interests.

I can suggest things for his parents to do with him at home.

Mr. Anderson helped Michael develop a plan for a birdfeeder and offered to bring in some wood for the project.

I suggested a magazine to help Michael learn more about underwater life so he could share this interest with his uncle.

Parent-Staff Communication Record

Child/age: ______________________ **Length of enrollment:** ________________

Parents: ____

Dates: ____

Day One

A.M. ____

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P.M. ____

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Day Two

A.M. ____

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P.M. ____

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Day Three

A.M. ______________________________

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P.M. ______________________________

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Day Four

A.M. ______________________________

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P.M. ______________________________

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Day Five

A.M. ______________________________

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P.M. ______________________________

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First Weekly Summary

(Complete after five days.)

Information you shared:

Information parents shared:

Day Six

A.M. ____________________

P.M. ____________________

Day Seven

A.M. ____________________

P.M. ____________________

Day Eight

A.M. ____________________

P.M. ____________________

Day Nine

A.M.

P.M.

Day Ten

A.M.

P.M.

Second Weekly Summary

(Complete at the end of another five days.)

Information you shared:

Information parents shared:

Review all your notes and answer the question on the next page.

How has the partnership helped you work with this child? (Give at least five examples.)

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Discuss this activity with the child's parents and your trainer.

Learning Activity II.
Keeping Parents Informed About the Program

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- keep parents informed about the program; and
- improve parent-program communication.

Parents feel more involved in the program when they know what's happening.

One of your most important responsibilities is to work with the director and other staff to keep parents up to date on activities at the school-age program. Parents feel more involved in the program when they know specific things that are happening. For example, they might like to know there's a new piece of equipment on the playground, the staff are attending a training workshop, the children will be making pumpkin bread for snack, one of the staff will be on vacation next week, and this month's parent meeting will focus on encouraging children's independence. Some of this information is passed from staff to parents during the times when children are picked up or dropped off. These times, however, are usually too brief to keep all the parents informed about everything that goes on at the program. Also, in some programs children arrive and leave by bus, so staff don't see parents everyday. The school-age program needs to use a variety of communication techniques to keep all parents informed about current activities and future plans.

Use newsletters to keep parents informed.

One of the most common ways to keep parents informed about the school-age program is through newsletters distributed to all parents. They contain general information that affects all families and, for large programs, specific information about each room. Often one person is responsible for putting the newsletter together; however, all staff contribute news. Parents and children also can be involved in gathering information, writing articles, or typing an issue. In addition to news about past and coming events, the newsletter also can include the month's menus, suggested activities for parents and children to do at home, information on community events of interest to families, and reviews of children's books or books on parenting or related topics. The newsletter can include space for parents to make suggestions for future issues or provide news, information, or a favorite recipe. This reinforces the partnership between parents and staff and lets parents know the newsletter is a useful result.

A parent might volunteer to work with children who are interested in contributing to the newsletter. Ideally, the volunteer would arrange his or her schedule to meet with the children during program hours. Children can prepare some of the items, such as a report on a poll of favorite activities, original jokes or poems, staff interviews, or a children's "opinion" column.

Parent handbooks are another way to inform parents. The handbook can present the program's policies and procedures and list opportunities for parents to become involved. It can be organized by topic (calendar, holidays) or alphabetically. Give a copy to each family and provide updates whenever necessary.

Include a variety of information in the parent handbook.

The following alphabetical list will give you some idea of the information provided in a parent handbook:[1]

Absences
Activities
Advisory committee
Calendar
Communication between program and home
Conferences/Meetings
Discipline and guidance
Dropping out of the program
Early dismissal days
Emergencies/Illness
Emergency closings
Enrollment/Fees
Field trips
Holidays/Vacations
Hours
Meals and snacks
Parent involvement
Personal belongings
Program philosophy
Release of children
Rights and responsibilities of children and parents
Staffing
Telephone numbers
Transportation

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[1] From Lincoln, Sunny Hollow, and Neill Adventure Club Programs, *Adventure Club Parents' Manual* (Robbinsdale, MN: Community Education and Services, Independent School District 281, Robbinsdale Area Schools, 1978).

Try these suggestions.

Here are some other suggestions for keeping parents informed:

Establish a message center where each family has a "mailbox." Shoe bags with multiple pockets work well for this purpose. These can be used to provide parents with general news and information.

Set up a parent bulletin board in the lobby or some other area through which all parents must pass. Post articles, a calendar of events, reminders of upcoming meetings, the week's menus, and other items of general interest.

Create a family photo board to help parents learn more about other children and families. Each family can provide a recent photograph (including pets, if they have any). You might also ask parents to complete a brief questionnaire about their favorite foods, sports, recreation activities, hobbies, and places to visit. You can post the responses next to each family's photo. When new families enroll, add their photos to the board. You could set aside one section to announce family news, such as the birth of a new baby, or to display postcards from families that are traveling.

Sponsor a family evening featuring a play or other production written, acted, directed, and produced by the children—complete with costumes, props, playbills, and refreshments. Use this as an opportunity to discuss other activities taking place at the program.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you answer some questions about a communication technique your program uses to keep parents informed. First review the abbreviated example that follows. Then select a communication technique, suggest ways to improve it, implement your suggestions, and report on the results.

Communicating With Parents

(Example)

Communication technique: *Program newsletter*

What information is included?

Upcoming field trips, birthdays, new games and magazines, special interest clubs for the month, best riddle of the week (selected by children), and activities parents and children might want to do together.

How often is the information shared or updated?

Bi-weekly

What is the role of the staff?

We take turns coordinating the writing, proofing, and making copies.

What is the role of the children?

They make suggestions about things their parents would like to know about the program.

How could they be more involved?

They could do some of the writing—articles , jokes, stories, poems. They could illustrate the newsletter, conduct surveys and polls, and help reproduce and collate the finished newsletters.

What is the role of the parents?

They read it.

How could they be more involved?

Parents could help produce the newsletter. They could provide us with information or articles. We could ask for volunteers to work with the children on a regular basis to help them produce the newsletter.

After trying out your ideas, what were the results?

I sent home a questionnaire asking parents for suggested items and for help in preparing the newsletter. I got lots of suggestions, and two parents offered to help. They worked on the latest issue. We included some parent-written articles, including one about a new park. One parent came in and worked with the children who were interested in producing the newsletter. These children conducted several polls about favorite snacks and activities. For the next issue they are sponsoring a joke exchange; jokes submitted by children will appear in the newsletter.

Communicating With Parents

Communication technique: ______________________________

What information is included?

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How often is the information shared or updated?

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What is the role of the staff?

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What is the role of the children?

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How could they be more involved?

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What is the role of the parents?

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How could they be more involved?

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After trying out your ideas, what were the results?

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Discuss this activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity III.

Providing Ways for Parents to Be Involved

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use techniques for parent involvement; and
- plan and implement a parent involvement strategy.

Create a variety of options for parent involvement.

Most parents would like to be involved in their child's life at the program, but they may not know about all the different ways they can contribute. Sometimes parents can arrange their work schedules so they can eat breakfast at the program once a month, go on a field trip, or attend a special program. Such activities benefit both parent and child. However, many parents are not able to participate in this way. It's important to offer a variety of options for parent involvement that match parents' interests, skills, and schedules. When parents register their children for the program, you can have them complete a brief questionnaire about how they would like to be involved in the program.

In addition to matching parents' interests with several options for involvement, you can let parents know how much their participation benefits the program. Parents who come on field trips may enjoy themselves so much they don't need much encouragement to offer to do it again. The parent who sews new curtains for the children's puppet theater, however, may never see the theater in action. In such a case, be sure to write a personal thank-you note. You could enclose a copy of the play the children wrote and produced and a photo of the puppet theater in action. Similarly, the parent who types the newsletter should be listed in every issue as the person who makes it possible for the news to get out to the other families.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some suggestions for helping parents become involved in your program.

Hold an orientation for new parents several times a year. Because families come and go during the year, you need to provide more than one orientation.

Involve parents in building or landscaping projects that can be worked on over a period of time. When a project is completed, hold a celebration party.

Keep a job jar in the room containing index cards with program-related jobs you never get around to doing that a parent could do without coming to the program. Parents can select a job from the jar, then see you for further instructions. Jobs might include repairing broken materials, creating science and nature kits or shopping at yard sales for cooking utensils or costumes.

Organize a family breakfast or dinner when parents can eat at the program on their way to work or home. Breakfast can be something simple—juice and bagels, for example. Dinner might be a meal planned and prepared by the children.

Invite parents to share their interests and talents. Parents might loan items for display, such as paintings, photographs, collections of artifacts, woodworking projects, or photo albums. Some parents might be willing to bring a slide show or video of their travels to share with the children.

Hold a family movie night, planned and hosted by the parents. The program could sell popcorn and drinks to raise funds for extra materials or field trips.

Schedule a "fix-it" night or a Saturday when children and parents can work together to spruce up the program facility, paint walls, give all the bicycles tune-ups, or prepare a plot of ground for a garden.

Open the program for one evening or on a weekend afternoon when children come to the program as though it were a regular day. Parents can also come and participate in games and sports activities, make a collage, join in a dance class, or sit back and observe how their child enjoys the program's activities.

Set up a parent corner. Include books, magazines, brochures, and other resources of interest to parents. If possible, provide comfortable chairs and refreshments.

Ask a parent to organize a photo album about the program. You can provide the pictures and the book; parents and children can put it together. Display the photo album in the reception area. Include a cover page thanking the family that organized the album.

Provide copies of a frequently updated wish list of resource materials and people you would like to have at the program. Parents might make contributions themselves, or they could help by putting you in touch with businesses, community organizations, or individuals who be willing to contribute time, talents, and materials.

Organize a series of parent workshops on topics related to raising school-age children. You can survey parents to find out what topics would be of most interest to them.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you try out a parent involvement strategy. Select from those mentioned earlier, or make up one of your own. Discuss your selection with the director and other staff. Ask for their ideas about implementing this strategy. First read the example; then complete the chart that follows to describe the strategy you chose and how it helped parents become involved.

Involving Parents

(Example)

Strategy:

The staff will sponsor a family games afternoon and early dinner.

Plans:

We will ask for parent volunteers to help us plan the event. The children can pick games they think their parents would enjoy. Younger and older siblings will be invited, too. We will charge a small fee per family to offset the costs involved. After the games we will have an early dinner—pizza, salad, and carrot cake. Everyone—parents, children, and staff—will help clean up.

Results:

Four parents volunteered to help us plan and set up on the day of the event. The children were very excited about sharing their favorite games with their parents and siblings. They chose volleyball, Ultimate Frisbee, and Capture the Flag as the games to play. We set up volleyball in the gym, and the other two games outdoors. We offered some other activities outdoors for the younger siblings. About half of the families attended. The parents got very involved with the games and seemed to really enjoy playing with their children. Dinner was very relaxing because we had the pizzas delivered and used paper plates. Cleanup was a breeze with everyone pitching in.

Follow-up Plans:

We decided to make this a regular activity offered once in the spring and once in the fall. Already the parents who did not attend, but heard how much fun it was, are asking when the next event will be. We'll encourage the parents to do more of the planning next time.

Involving Parents

Strategy:

Plans:

Results:

Follow-up Plans:

Discuss this activity with your trainer and your colleagues.

Learning Activity IV.

Planning and Participating in Parent-Staff Conferences

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- prepare for a conference by reviewing information about a child's development; and
- participate in a parent-staff conference.

Parent-staff conferences are opportunities for in-depth discussions.

At least twice a year, parents and school-age staff need to meet to review how the child is progressing in all areas of development and to set goals for continued growth and learning. You may not think conferences are necessary in school-age programs because the children are not there all day. However, if a child attends both before and after school, this adds up to a large part of the day. A lot of growth and learning takes place in your program, and this needs to be shared with parents.

Parent-staff conferences are opportunities to focus on one child and family without any distractions or interruptions. They are opportunities to explain the program's goals and reaffirm your partnership with parents. Although much information about the child is shared throughout the day, conferences are times when you and the parents can discuss the child in depth and reaffirm your trust in each other.

Usually a conference has no single goal; it can meet a number of different needs. Here's what some specialists have said about their goals for parent conferences.[2]

> "To make the parents aware of how their child is developing, at what level she/he is functioning, and if she/he is in need of any special help." Janet Rogers, Lycoming Child Day Care, Williamsport, PA.
>
> "To give the parent confidence in the staff; to establish a social relationship between parent and staff." Margaret Fredrickson, Northedge School, Sudbury, MA.

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[2] Adapted with permission from "Ideas for Effective Parent Conferences," *Child Care Information Exchange* (Exchange Press, PO Box 2890, Redmond, WA 98073, November 1979), pp. 26-27.

> "To discuss the child's development; to identify future goals." Shelly Brick, Kensington-Kingstowne Child Care Program, Philadelphia, PA.
>
> "To get to know the parents enough to feel comfortable with them and them with me; and to better understand the child through the parent." Lois Grigsby, Kendal Lab Child Care, Evanston, IL.
>
> "To foster greater awareness of the importance the environment plays in a child's development—to educate the parents." Jan Lucas, Westend Day Care, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada.
>
> "To provide support for working parents by supplying information on child development, available social services, etc." Tracy Neri, The Day Care Program Facility, Norwich, VT.

Parents also have goals for the conference. They may have a specific concern they would like to discuss or a suggestion for how they would like you to work with their child. They may have a complaint about something the program does or doesn't do. Often parents want to be reassured you like their child, are competent, and think they are doing a good job raising their child.

Planning for Conferences

Explain to parents when they enroll their child how often conferences take place, their purpose, and what is discussed. When it's time to schedule a conference, ask parents what time would be most convenient for them to attend. Offer several options and provide enough lead time so parents can make plans. Allow enough time so you and the parents don't feel rushed. Ask them to think of any questions they might have and topics they want to cover. You might want to develop a planning form parents could use to prepare for the conference. Tell them you hope to learn more about the child's life away from the program—at home, at school, and in the community—so you can better support the child's growth and learning.

To make the best use of the time set aside for the conference, it's important to do some planning. You will need to think about what points you want to cover. Review your observation notes, anecdotal records, and any other written materials that provide objective information about the child. You can also collect samples of the child's art, stories, or other creations. Organize your notes to make sure you have covered all areas of development—physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional. If you have any concerns about the child's health (for example, if you suspect the child might need glasses), these should be written down. Ask your colleagues to share any information they have about this child.

Many parents are interested in how their child interacts and gets along in a group setting with his or her peers. They want to know as much as possible about what their child does while at the program—for example, with whom the child plays, whether the child is more likely to initiate group activities or follow another child's lead, the activities and materials that really spark the child's interest, and how the child handles disagreements. Make sure your notes include examples that will help parents picture and understand what their child does at the program.

Sometimes staff members feel a little uneasy before a conference. It may help to role-play with your supervisor or a colleague. You can practice sharing your observations and answering the kinds of questions the parents are likely to ask.

Participating in the Conference

At the start of the conference, try to establish a relaxed and comfortable tone. Older children can be included in the conference if parents think it is appropriate. Anticipate at least five minutes of social conversation before the more serious discussions begin. Before the conference, decide who will take the lead in the conference. (Usually this is the staff member with primary responsibility for this child.) This person should begin by explaining how the conference will proceed: "I'm so glad you could come today. Let me tell you how we'll proceed. We'll talk about a typical day for Karen, both before and after school. First, I'll provide information based on our observations at the program. Next, you can let us know what Karen likes to do at home and in school. . ." This is a good time to stress that the conference is a time for sharing information and is not in any way an evaluation of their child's performance.

During the conference, be sure there are many opportunities for parents to provide input and ask questions. After discussing all areas of the child's development, the next step is to set goals and develop strategies for continuing to promote the child's growth and learning. These strategies will be implemented at home and at the program. You and the parents can determine the best way to share the goals and strategies with the child. (Older children can be included in the planning process.) The goals and strategies will serve as the framework for discussions at the next conference.

Try these suggestions.

Here are some other suggestions for conducting successful conferences.

Begin and end the conference with a positive statement about your relationship with the child. "We really enjoy A.J.'s sense of humor. He seems to have an endless supply of new jokes and is able to see the humor in every situation."

Ask parents an open-ended question if they seem uncertain or reluctant to talk about their concerns. "What else about Rebecca or the program would you like to discuss?"

Invite parents to work with you by asking questions and seeking their advice. Stress the importance of consistency between home and the program. "It's very helpful to hear that Paul responds well to praise. We'll remember to let him know we value his efforts."

Listen carefully to what parents have to say, without interrupting or rushing them. Accept their feelings even if they are different from your own. Restate their comments and suggestions to make sure you have heard them correctly. "You would like us to encourage Shauna to get involved in a greater variety of physical activities."

Share problems using factual and objective information. Avoid preaching, blaming, criticizing, or judging. "We have noticed on several occasions Kirsten has exaggerated about small things that happen at the program. Have you noticed similar behavior at home?"

Pay attention to parents' reactions by maintaining eye contact and being aware of body language that may indicate the parent is feeling tense, hurt, disappointed, or angry.

Summarize your discussion·at the end of the conference, emphasizing what actions you each have agreed to take and how you will follow up. "We agree Laura is ready for more independence. We can find ways for her to assume more responsibility at the program. At home she can have more freedom to plan her weekend outings with friends. We'll talk next month to review these strategies." Add a positive statement about the child.

Take notes during the conference, especially if you are discussing a complex or difficult situation. Explain to parents your notes will help you follow up on their concerns.

Offer more than one suggestion when parents ask you for advice about handling a specific situation. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell the parents you will look into it and get back in touch. Encourage them to think about what would be best for their child. "Some parents find it helpful to ignore their child's interest in the latest fads in dress because these interests pass quickly. Other parents think it's important to set guidelines about appropriate clothes to wear in different situations—school, place of worship, shopping, or going out with the family."

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you develop a plan for holding a conference with the parents of one of the children in the program. Include information from your own observations and those of other staff. Conduct the conference, then answer the evaluation questions.

Planning a Conference

Child: ____________________ **Parents:** ____________________

Age: ____________________ **Age at last conference:** ____________

Date of conference: ____________ **Date of last conference:** ____________

Describe a typical day at the program for this child:

What sparks this child's interests?

How does this child handle disagreements?

With whom does this child play, and in what ways?

Anecdotes to share:

Any concerns:

Developmental Summary

Use this form to summarize the child's progress in all areas of development. List the goals set at the last conference (if there has been one). For each area of development, provide specific examples of what the child does (for example, participates in gymnastics, offers to assist younger children, remembers rules, writes stories and plays).

Area of Development	Goals
Physical (for example, participation in sports, active games, movement, and dance, and use of fine motor skills: crafts, constructions, and puzzles)	
Cognitive (for example, use of thinking and reasoning skills to solve problems, explore math, read, write, do research, and plan and carry out ideas)	
Socio-Emotional (for example, interactions with children and adults, use of self-discipline, and ability to follow rules and respect rights of others)	

Suggested Goals

Use this chart to list some suggested goals for the next six months. You will also use the chart to prepare for the next conference—six months from now.

Area of Development	Goals
Physical (for example, participation in sports, active games, movement, and dance, and use of fine motor skills: crafts, constructions, and puzzles)	
Cognitive (for example, use of thinking and reasoning skills to solve problems, explore math, read, write, do research, and plan and carry out ideas)	
Socio-Emotional (for example, interactions with children and adults, use of self-discipline, and ability to follow rules and respect rights of others)	

Now hold your conference with the parents. Ask for their ideas on suggested goals and add them to the list above if you all agree. Complete the conference evaluation on the next page.

Conference Evaluation

After the conference, think about what happened and answer these questions:

How did you establish a relaxed tone?

How did you start the conference?

How did you provide for parent input?

Were you asked for advice? If so, how did you give it?

What anecdotes did you tell about the child's participation in the program?

How did you summarize the conference?

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How did you end the conference?

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What would you do differently next time?

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Discuss this learning activity with your trainer.

Learning Activity V.
Reaching Out to Families

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize signs that families are under stress; and
- provide support to families under stress.

School-age staff can lend a helping hand.

Parents are often under stress. Balancing the demands of a job and family, trying to be involved in their child's school and the school-age program, and not understanding changes in their child's behavior can leave parents feeling overwhelmed. You are in an excellent position to lend a helping hand. Some parents will feel comfortable sharing their worries and seeking advice; others will not. Regardless of whether parents approach you or you approach them, keep in mind that supporting parents means enhancing their sense of competence by helping them find their own answers.

You can reach out to parents by providing support and information. In particular, you can:

- recognize when families are under stress;
- help parents locate appropriate resources; and
- give parents information and guidance on school-age children's development.

Recognizing When Families Are Under Stress[3]

Stress is a normal part of daily life for most families. Parents try to cope with typical frustrations and tension, and not let stress interfere with their work and home activities. Some families, however, are affected over a long period of time by significant sources of stress such as community violence, homelessness, substance abuse, or lack of basic necessities. The stresses are not caused by single events such as divorce or a car accident. Rather, they are routine, unrelenting, and woven into daily life. They are a result of societal conditions and pressures that are beyond the control of individual families.

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[3] Adapted with permission from Derry Koralek, *Responding to Children Under Stress* (Washington, DC: Head Start Bureau, 1993), pp. 40-42.

The following are examples of sources of long-term significant stress that might be experienced by the children and families in your program. There may be other sources that are specific to your community.

- Unemployment.
- Lack of necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care.
- Lack of transportation to work, job training, or a health clinic.
- Exposure to violence in the home or in the community.
- Living in a shelter or other temporary housing situation.
- Living in overcrowded or inadequate housing.
- Chronic illness or disability of a child or other family member, accompanied by lack of access to needed services and support.
- Substance abuse in the household or in the community at large.
- Abuse and neglect of a child, spouse, or other family member.
- Depression or other mental illness of a child or adult family member.
- Learning a new language and adapting to a new culture.

High levels of stress can overwhelm families.

Regardless of what is causing the high levels of stress in their lives, families tend to have similar concerns, needs, and behaviors. Some families have the skills and strength needed to cope with their stress in positive ways. However, some families are overwhelmed by their stressful environment. They may experience effects such as the following:

- A sense that life is unpredictable, unstable, and chaotic. If families move frequently, children must change schools and adjust to new teachers and classmates. Children may have difficulty focusing on schoolwork and lack a sense of order and discipline in their lives.
- Inability to give their children affection and attention. Children become independent too soon.
- Unmet health and nutrition needs of children and family members. Families may not have access to needed health care, including immunizations, dental checkups, and counseling.
- Inconsistent, overly punitive, or nonexistent parental discipline.

Know the signs of stress.

When a family is under stress, the parents may seem disorganized, frequently forgetting things such as permission slips for a field trip or an upcoming school holiday. A parent might seem frustrated when a child is slow to get ready to go home, or the parent might state he or she doesn't know how to handle the child's growing independence: "It seems like all we ever do these days is fight." Parents under stress might be unwilling to accept help, or they might be more interested in talking about their own problems than their child's.

When you see signs of stress, it is important to not add to them. You can discuss the child's inappropriate behavior or the program's vacation schedule on another day. However, you will want to share information about their child that will help them get through a difficult evening. For example, letting a parent know their child has been tired and cranky all afternoon allows you to discuss whether the child might be coming down with the flu. Because the parent knows the reasons for the child's behavior, he or she is less likely to be frustrated or angered by the crankiness and more likely to comfort the child. When parents feel less stress, they are more likely to interact positively with their children and less likely to lose control.

Get to know all the parents.

Make an effort to really get to know the parents of the children in your program. Invite them into the room when they bring their children in the morning and when they pick them up. Place a suggestion box in a prominent place and draw attention to it. Encourage parents to visit often and make them welcome. Remember that you, the program, and the parents are part of a team working for each child's good.

Always notify your supervisor when you think parents may need professional help. Never make recommendations to parents without first clearing them with your supervisor. Your job is to help parents get the support they need, not to provide it yourself.

When parents do confide in you, it's essential to maintain complete confidentiality. This means you should not discuss a child with anyone other than your colleagues or the child's parents. This holds true for information about families as well. In addition, you should not share records with anyone who does not have a "need to know," and not hold discussions about children or families when other children are present. Ask your director about your program's guidelines for maintaining confidentiality.

Helping Parents Locate Resources

Parents often need information on where they can get help for themselves, their child, or the family. Your director and trainer can give you information about parent education opportunities. Here are some things you can do to help.

- Encourage parents to connect with one another by introducing them to families that live in their neighborhood or have children of the same age.
- Develop a parent exchange list that helps parents support one another through the sharing of responsibilities and errands such as carpooling, grocery shopping, meal preparation, and car repairs.
- Call parents' attention to resources, newspaper or magazine articles, workshops, and television or radio shows on stages of child development, positive guidance, and family life.
- Display books on topics of interest to parents—step-parenting, juggling home and work responsibilities, fast and healthy meals—and invite parents to check out these resources.
- Tell parents about services and special programs provided by organizations in the community.
- Provide names, phone numbers, locations, and hours of operation when you suggest a program or event.
- Offer reluctant parents help in contacting other resources.

Giving Parents Information and Guidance on Developmental Stages of School-Age Children

Parents sometimes do not know as much as they want to about the typical development of children in the school-age years. Many books on child development do not cover middle childhood, and often parent education courses focus on infants through preschoolers. As a result, parents may expect too much or too little of a particular child at a particular age. Here are some things you can do to help.

- With the parents, observe a child, asking yourselves, "What is he or she experiencing?" to help parents see the world through the eyes of their child.
- Tell parents about workshops on sibling rivalry, independence, characteristics of early adolescents, and other topics of interest.
- Include information on child development in the program's newsletters and on the parent bulletin board.
- Invite parents to attend staff workshops.

- Lend books or videotapes from the program's resource library.
- Schedule conferences to discuss particular problems.

Model appropriate ways to interact with children.

One of the best ways to provide information and guidance to parents on child development is during drop-off and pick-up times and in longer visits during the day. Without any extra effort or planning, you can model for parents appropriate ways to interact with children. For example, at pick-up time parents might see the following exchanges between a staff member and several children:

> Ms. Danforth encourages James to go back outside to help bring in the balls and sports equipment from the playground, laughs and talks with Julianna as she untangles a knot in her crocheting project, and asks Nat a question about his water color painting—"Tell me how you made the different colors blend together."
>
> These children's parents might comment, "I can't get James to put his things away at home." "Julianna's so impatient and frustrated when we crochet together at home that I gave up trying to teach her new stitches." "All Nat's paintings look the same to me."
>
> Ms. Danforth can use these comments to open conversations about promoting children's self-help skills, using learning situations as opportunities for relaxed talks with children, and supporting creativity by asking about children's artistic endeavors.

When you demonstrate positive ways of working with children, you do a lot to help parents improve their interactions with their children.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you keep records of times when you reach out to parents in response to their requests or because you notice they need your support. Over the next few weeks, make a note of what you do. Write down the problem, what the parent asks for or what you see is needed, how you respond, and what the outcome is. Be sure to maintain confidentiality about these events. Begin by reading the example on the next page.

Reaching Out to Families

(Example)

Child: *Larry* **Age:** *10 years* **Date:** *October 23*

Problem:

Larry's been very quiet at home. He's usually very outgoing. He goes to his room after dinner and doesn't come out again until the morning. When asked if he's okay, he tells his parents, "I'm fine, leave me alone."

What parents asked for or what I saw was needed:

Larry's parents asked me if I had observed any changes in Larry's behavior. They asked me what he's been doing at the program.

My response:

I shared some comments Larry recently made about his upcoming move to a new home with his mother and younger sister. His parents said they are separating and that Larry's father would remain in their present home while his mother and the children moved to a new one. I asked them if they knew how Larry felt about the changes in their lives. They said they had not discussed it with the children yet. They didn't realize Larry knew what was going on. I said that I thought that Larry's quiet behavior might be because he is worried about the changes. I offered to ask the director for information about counseling services in the community. They said they would welcome the information. Also, we agreed to encourage Larry to participate in program activities.

The outcome:

The parents say the counseling has been very helpful. Larry seems more relaxed and is willing to talk about his feelings. At the program he's been an active member of several clubs. His parents and I talk about once a week to keep each other up to date on Larry's situation.

Reaching Out to Families

Child: ________________ **Age:** ________________ **Date:** ________________

Problem:

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What parents asked for or what I saw was needed:

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My response:

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The outcome:

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Reaching Out to Families

Child: Age: Date:

Problem:

What parents asked for or what I saw was needed:

My response:

The outcome:

Reaching Out to Families

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

Problem:

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What parents asked for or what I saw was needed:

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My response:

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The outcome:

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Discuss your responses with your trainer.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new skills in working with families. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Working With Families

Communicating With Parents Often to Exchange Information About Their Child at Home and at the Program

1. Why did Ms. Kee think it was important for Molly's mother to visit the program?

a. Although Molly writes plays at home, Ms. Kee knew Ms. Moran would feel more reassured about Molly's new friendships if she actually saw her with the other children.

b. She thought Ms. Moran would like to meet Molly's new friends; the Morans might want to encourage the children to visit each other on the weekends.

c. She wanted Ms. Moran to see for herself that the program is a place where Molly finds it easy to make friends.

2. What other kinds of information will Ms. Kee and the Morans need to share now that Molly is making friends?

a. What other interests, talents, and skills Molly is developing.

b. How they can help her find ways to share her interests with other children at the program.

Offering a Variety of Ways for Parents to Participate in Their Child's Life at the Program

1. How did Ms. Williams help Mr. Bradley think of a way to be involved in the program and show Jerry he was interested?

a. She asked him about his work and interests.

b. She told him she'd noticed he was good at fixing things.

c. She suggested that he and Jerry could repair the toy trucks for the program.

2. What did Ms. Williams learn from Mr. Bradley?

a. Parents who do not attend family nights are still interested in their children and may want to be involved in the program.

b. Parent meetings should be scheduled at different times to accommodate more families.

Providing Support for Families

1. What did Mr. Lopez do to help Ms. Thomas understand Maria's behavior?

a. He told her he had noticed Maria was ready to be more independent.

b. He said he had planned to talk to Maria about ways to make the program more interesting for her.

c. He said he would make some adjustments in the program to accommodate Maria's new interests.

2. What does Mr. Lopez plan to do to help Ms. Thomas understand and respond to Maria's growing need for independence?

a. He suggested they meet in a week to talk about how Maria responds to the changes at the program.

b. He offered to share suggestions about how they could both help Maria feel better about herself as she grows toward independence.

Module 12:

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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OVERVIEW

MANAGING A SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM INVOLVES:

- observing and recording information about each child's growth and development;
- working as a member of a team to plan an individualized program; and
- following administrative policies and procedures.

Your management role includes planning, conducting, and evaluating the program.

School-age staff play many roles. Your most important role is to develop a positive relationship with each child and provide children with a safe and interesting program. But, as you know, working in a school-age program involves much more. You encourage children's exploration and learning. You support families and help parents balance their conflicting work and home responsibilities. And, you and your colleagues use management skills to ensure the smooth operation of the program.

You and your colleagues may not see yourselves as managers. Most likely your program has a director who performs a variety of management tasks. The director develops budgets, makes hiring decisions, develops schedules, supervises staff, and provides training. Yet you and your colleagues are also managers. You work as a team to plan, conduct, and evaluate the program. Performing these managerial tasks allows you to create an effective environment, guide children's growth and learning, encourage their independence, and handle other responsibilities.

One of the best ways to contribute to program management is to use a systematic approach to observing children. Observing children and recording what they say and do, gives you useful information. You can then share that information with other staff and work as a team to plan a program that matches the skills and interests of individuals and the group.

School-age programs need policies and procedures that tell everyone—parents, children, staff, and volunteers—how the program typically operates. For example, a program policy might state that staff can allow children to leave the program with someone other than their parents when written permission is on file. Program procedures in this situation might include reviewing the permission form to make sure it is up-to-date and lists the person who is picking up the child, checking the individual's identification, and asking him or her to sign out the child on the daily attendance record. Upholding policies, following procedures, and maintaining appropriate records, help to keep the program running smoothly. They are part of your management role in the school-age program.

Listed below are examples of how school-age staff demonstrate their competence in managing a program.

Observing and Recording Information About Each Child's Growth and Development

Use a system to observe and record information that is objective, accurate, and avoids labeling. "Candice sat under a tree drawing circles in the dirt with a twig."

Observe children in different settings and at different times of the day. "Yesterday I observed Danielle while she and Terrence played with the sock puppets. The next time I'd like to observe her during a group activity."

Conduct observations for a specific reason: for example, to assess social skills, evaluate the environment, or identify the role a child assumes within the group. "Joey has a lot of good ideas, but he seems to have difficulty communicating them during activities and club meetings. I need to conduct some observations to see how he interacts with others and how they respond to him."

Record many instances of a child's actions before drawing conclusions about that child's abilities and needs. "I reviewed our observation recordings for Yancey. He uses a wide range of art materials, explores different techniques, and is willing to take risks and start over if his ideas don't work out.

Work with colleagues to develop a schedule for conducting regular observations of all the children in the program. "First, let's discuss how often we'd like to observe each child, then we can develop a schedule."

Conduct joint observations with a colleague to check the accuracy of the information collected. "Our observation recordings are so different we may need to ask a third person to conduct an observation with us."

Working as a Member of a Team to Plan an Individualized Program

Participate in staff meetings regularly to evaluate the program and to develop plans. "Next week we're going to the dress rehearsal for *Grease*. Let's think of some ways to extend the children's enjoyment of the musical. We can get a tape of the Broadway production and maybe some clothes from the 'fifties.' "

Share with colleagues information gathered from observing children and use it to plan for each child and for the group. "Dawn and Vinnie have been drawing cartoon characters all week. Maybe they would like to do a comic strip for our newsletter. If so, we can ask them what supplies they need."

Share information collected through observations with parents and encourage them to promote their children's growth and development. "Zach really likes playing board games, but sometimes he has a hard time following the rules. Would you have time to play games with him at home?"

Involve children in the planning process. "At Friday's group meeting we evaluate the week's activities and share our ideas for the coming week."

Conduct enrollment and periodic surveys of children and parents to collect information on skills, needs, and interests and to encourage feedback and suggestions. "When I reviewed the children's surveys I noticed hardly anyone is using the woodworking area any more. We need to take a closer look at this area."

Use creative thinking skills such as problem solving and brainstorming in planning and to handle problems and challenges. "We want to set up a variety of interest areas every day, but it takes a lot of time and work to do it. Maybe the children could help us set up. We would save a lot of time, and we could learn more about what they like to do."

Help children form clubs that allow them to explore their shared interests. "When I reviewed the children's surveys, I noticed we have enough interested children to start a Photography Club. I can meet with the interested children tomorrow afternoon."

Plan changes to the environment, materials, interest areas, and activities to address the cultures, abilities, and interests of individual children. "Gina is not a strong reader, but she really enjoys science fiction. She might like some of Daniel Pinkwater's books. They're interesting and not too difficult."

Appreciate and use the strengths of other team members, including parents, volunteers, and colleagues. "Every year Mrs. Parker volunteers to take the group on a late winter hike. She loves nature—even during cold weather—and she shows us signs that spring is coming."

Plan some activities and events in conjunction with community resources. "The community police officer agreed to help us plan a 'safe biking rodeo.' Children can bring their bikes to the program and have them checked for safety."

Following Administrative Policies and Procedures

Review program policies before starting a new task. "I need to find out how we arrange for a field trip."

Complete management tasks according to a schedule. "Before the end of the month, I'll review the parent surveys so we can address their concerns and incorporate appropriate suggestions."

Use the program's system for recordkeeping. "Can you keep an eye on the children while I fill out the accident report for Paul's skinned knee?"

Keep informed about job responsibilities. "I've heard that new regulations for reporting child abuse are being developed. Will we have a staff meeting to discuss them?"

Provide substitute staff with adequate information on weekly plans and program practices. "When an outdoor game is canceled due to bad weather, refer to the list of back-up games on the bulletin board. Next to each one are the names of children who know how to lead it."

Share ideas related to program policies and procedures with colleagues and the supervisor. "Last fall it seemed important to gather the children for a daily meeting when they arrived. Now they seem bored during the meetings. Perhaps we should stop using the meetings for announcements, or maybe we don't need regular meetings anymore. I suggest we ask the children what they think."

Answer parents' questions about program operations and refer them to the supervisor if appropriate. "Mr. Wheeler, we need written permission for Brent to walk to his karate class. You can complete this form and return it at the end of the day. As soon as the form is on file, Brent can sign out to walk to his class."

Being an Effective Manager

In the following situations, school-age staff are managing a program. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Observing and Recording Information About Each Child's Growth and Development

Graham pours water into eight glasses on the science table. He reaches for a spoon. Mr. Munson kneels beside him and watches. Index cards and a pen are in his pocket. "It looks like you're ready to start. Do you think you'll be able to play a tune when you tap the glasses with a spoon?" "I'm not sure," says Graham, "but I like experimenting." Graham taps several glasses with the spoon. He looks at Mr. Munson and says, "Did you hear that? When there's less water, the sound gets lower. When there's more, it gets higher." He gently taps each glass. "It sounds like two glasses sound the same," says Mr. Munson. Graham responds, "That's because they have the same amount of water. I don't need two that are the same. I'll pour a little out of that one so I can have eight different sounds. I'm going to line the glasses up, starting with the ones with the least water. Then it'll sound like do-re-mi!" Graham arranges the glasses and begins making up a melody. Mr. Munson jots down on an index card: Graham likes to experiment, he arranged the glasses from less to more full to make the sound go from low to high, and he began to make up his own tune.

1. **How did Mr. Munson use a regular activity to gather objective and accurate information about Graham?**

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2. **What did Mr. Munson learn about Graham?**

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Working as a Member of a Team to Plan an Individualized Program

On Monday Ms. Wang asks the staff to spend time this week collecting information on how children use the quiet area. "I've noticed that this area is used less and less by children. At Friday's planning meeting, I'd like to discuss what we can do to make this area more inviting." During the week staff take turns conducting observations in the quiet area. They record how children use the homework table, listening corner, and reading nook. Staff also ask children what materials they'd like to have in the area and what changes they think are needed. Telma says, "The headphones don't always work. I really like to listen to music, but it's frustrating when it cuts on and off." Darnell says, "Sometimes, I like to do homework, but I can't find the supplies I need." During drop-off and pick-up times the staff asks parents for their input. Mr. Trenton responds, "Could you order some new magazines? Marcus says he's too old for the ones you subscribe to." On Friday the staff share what they have learned—the children would like the area to have homework supplies such as staplers and rulers, the program's magazines don't appeal to a wide age range, and the headphones may need to be replaced. They plan to make the following improvements: add a magazine shelf and subscribe to five new magazines, chosen with input from the older children; provide a plastic tote organizer stocked with pens, pencils, erasers, staplers, rulers, and other supplies suggested by the children; repair or replace the broken headphones.

1. **How did Ms. Wang and the staff use a team approach to planning?**

2. **How will the staff use the information they collected to plan an individualized program?**

Following Administrative Policies and Procedures

Ms. Jacobs is reviewing the Staff Handbook on her break. "Even though I've been working here for a while," she tells Ms. Gaines, "I need to review our policies now and then. I have a volunteer coming in to work with me starting next week. Do you know where I can find the guidelines for supervising volunteers?" Ms. Gaines replies, "There's a brief overview in the section on staffing requirements in the Staff Handbook. You might also read the Volunteer Handbook. I had a volunteer work with me in the art area once a week all summer. Even though she wasn't allowed to be alone with the children, it was very helpful to have her do special projects on a regular basis. The Volunteer Handbook describes the kinds of things volunteers can do." Ms. Jacobs reads the section on staffing requirements and reviews the Volunteer Handbook. Later in the week she meets with a new volunteer to discuss the kinds of activities he would like to lead and to review policies about the role of volunteers at the program.

1. **How does Ms. Jacobs stay informed about administrative policies and procedures?**

2. **What tasks did Ms. Jacobs complete according to the program's policies?**

Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There can be more than one good answer.

Managing Your Own Life

Managing your home life can be challenging.

Many of the things you do at home contribute to your performance as a manager. You may pay bills, buy food and clothing, decide on major purchases such as a car or furniture, or plan a vacation or weekend outings. Management skills such as observing, individualizing, and planning are used in home and work settings. When you make a grocery list, for example, you consider how many people will be eating each meal, what foods each person likes, and what ingredients you need for each recipe. You can do this because you observe each member of your household, include them in planning balanced meals, and follow recipes—the "policies and procedures" for food preparation.

The more orderly and efficient you are in managing your life outside of work, the more time you have to do things other than chores. The more planning you do as a team, the more likely it is you and your family will enjoy spending time together. Think about times when careful management encourages efficient use of your time.

- You plan your errands so you can do them all at once rather than making several trips.
- You make sure you have all the tools and materials you need before starting a project, such as painting the kitchen cupboards or repairing a bicycle.
- You keep records of all bills and file receipts promptly.
- You keep emergency numbers posted beside the telephone.
- You plan outings or vacations that are of interest to everyone.
- You borrow a folding table and extra chairs from a neighbor when you are having a crowd over for a holiday meal.
- You make a "to do list" including what you must do today (having your car inspected), what you'd like to do (get a haircut), and what you can wait to do later (shop for a new bathing suit for next month's vacation).
- You remember the importance of relaxation and make time to exercise and talk with friends and family members.

Organizing your time and your environment to work **for** you (rather than **against** you) helps you manage more effectively. Use the chart on the following page to record something you've already done to manage your life more effectively, and to plan a strategy for solving a frustrating situation.

Frustrating Situation	What I Did
I used to spend time practically every day searching for my keys.	*I put a hook on the inside wall by the door. Now, I hang my keys there every day when I get home.*

Frustrating Situation	What I Could Do

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of this module if you need definitions of the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills used by school-age staff who are effective managers. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then discuss your answers with your trainer.

Observing and Recording Information About Each Child's Growth and Development	**I Do This**		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Using a system to observe and record what children say and do in an objective, accurate way that avoids the use of labels.	☐	☐	☐
2. Observing children in different settings and at different times of the day.	☐	☐	☐
3. Conducting observations for a specific reason: for example, to identify skills and interests, to evaluate the environment, or to measure progress.	☐	☐	☐
4. Recording many instances of a child's actions before drawing conclusions about that child's abilities and needs.	☐	☐	☐
5. Developing an observation schedule with colleagues so every child is observed on a regular basis.	☐	☐	☐
6. Conducting periodic joint observations with another staff member to check the accuracy of information collected; then comparing the recordings.	☐	☐	☐
Working as a Member of a Team to Plan an Individualized Program			
7. Participating in regular staff meetings to evaluate program effectiveness and to develop weekly plans that incorporate the "lessons learned."	☐	☐	☐
8. Discussing observation recordings with other staff and using the information to plan for each child and for the group.	☐	☐	☐
9. Using parent surveys and open-ended questionnaires to collect information on children's interests and needs and to evaluate program effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐

Working as a Member of a Team to Plan an Individualized Program (continued)

	I Do This		
	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
10. Involving children in the planning process.	☐	☐	☐
11. Sharing observation information with parents and encouraging them to help their children grow and develop.	☐	☐	☐
12. Changing the environment, offering new materials, and planning specific activities to address the cultures, needs, abilities, and interests of individual children.	☐	☐	☐
13. Conducting periodic surveys to identify children's interests and encourage them to evaluate the program.	☐	☐	☐
14. Identifying topics of interest to several children and helping them form clubs to pursue these interests.	☐	☐	☐
15. Appreciating and using the strengths of other team members (colleagues, parents, and volunteers).	☐	☐	☐
16. Coordinating with social services, health, safety, and education resources in the community.	☐	☐	☐
17. Using creative thinking skills to plan and to address problems and challenges.	☐	☐	☐

Following Administrative Policies and Procedures

18. Meeting and talking with colleagues and the supervisor to provide input on program issues.	☐	☐	☐
19. Keeping informed about job responsibilities and program policies and procedures.	☐	☐	☐
20. Reviewing program policies before starting a new task.	☐	☐	☐
21. Completing management tasks according to a schedule.	☐	☐	☐

Following Administrative Policies and Procedures (continued)	**I Do This** Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
22. Following the program's system for accurate and timely recordkeeping.	☐	☐	☐
23. Providing substitute staff with adequate information on weekly plans and program practices.	☐	☐	☐
24. Answering parents' questions about program policies and procedures and referring them to the supervisor when appropriate.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 12, Program Management.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Learning Activity I.

Using a Systematic Approach to Observing and Recording

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify reasons for making observations in a school-age program; and
- develop a system for regularly observing and recording children's behavior.

Why Observing Children Is Important

Observing children is an ongoing process for people with children in their lives. They watch infants play and thrill at seeing them respond to others with cooing, smiles, and laughter. They watch toddlers and marvel at their first words and expanding physical skills. They watch preschoolers as they learn to play with others cooperatively. And they observe school-age children as they become independent individuals with unique personalities.

Observations are a useful way to get to know individual children—what they like to do, what skills they are developing, who they like to be with. It helps to have a reason for the observation, for example, to find out the role a child typically assumes during small group activities.

School-age staff observe children for a variety of reasons.

To determine each child's interests, skills, and needs. "Michael likes to read sports magazines. He keeps track of the 'stats' for his favorite college basketball teams."

To plan a program based on the interests, skills, and needs of each child. "There's been a lot of interest in recycling lately. Let's talk about using an environmental theme in several interest areas next week."

To measure each child's progress. "I've recorded the new volleyball skills Carla developed during outdoor play this month."

To resolve particular problems a child might have. "I reviewed my notes, and it seems Josh leaves games and activities when the atmosphere is very competitive."

To report children's progress to parents and colleagues. "Mrs. White, I'm glad to see you. Jasmine has been practicing for weeks, and today she mastered doing a forward flip on the trampoline. She wants you to watch the gymnastics class for a minute so she can show you."

To evaluate the effects of the environment and the program's activities. "Please bring your observations of this month's outdoor activities to Friday's meeting so we can discuss what went well and what we want to do differently next month."

Staff use the information gained through observations to provide a quality program that meets individual and developmental needs. They share the information with colleagues and parents, use it to plan activities, add new materials, and guide their interactions with children.

How to Observe

To undertake these and other tasks, you need to observe children carefully and systematically. This involves watching, listening to, and writing down what children do and say as it happens, according to a particular method. The information you write down is called a recording.

To be complete, recordings must include several facts. These are:

- the child's name and age;
- the observer's name;
- the date of the observation;
- the behavior (what the child you are observing does and says); and
- the setting (where the activity is taking place and who is involved—for example, "Debby and Ron sit on the floor in the quiet area looking at magazines").

Use these tips for recording observations of children.

Here are some suggestions for recording your observations of children:[1]

- Write what you see, not what you think is happening.
- Jot notes frequently. Carry a pad or index cards and pencil with you.
- Use short phrases instead of complete sentences, to save time.
- Try to abbreviate and shorten what a child said—don't try to write all the words, but get the gist of what is said.
- Describe *how* a child is doing or saying something.
- Develop a system of abbreviations or initials; for instance, for areas of the room, use dr-drama, qu-quiet, and so on.
- Use arrows to indicate movement.

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[1] Adapted from materials developed by the Head Start Resource and Training Center (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1975).

- Make diagrams of the environment showing the child in relation to the setting, other children in the room, and adults.
- Underline words to indicate a particular intensity (for instance, "said loudly").

Observation is an ongoing process.

A single observation cannot provide a complete picture of a child. Children, like adults, do not behave in the same ways all the time. Illness, reactions to events at home, school, or the program, and other things affect what children do and say. Several brief (five- to ten-minute) observations can provide the information needed to determine a child's interests, skills, and needs. They should take place over a period of time. You can observe during indoor and outdoor activities and as children clean up, move from one activity to another, arrive and leave the program, and interact with peers and other staff. Children's abilities, interests, and needs change over time; therefore, observation is an ongoing process.

When you have collected several recordings on a child, you can make comments such as the following:

- "Wendy likes to work on puzzles with lots of pieces."
- "Justin can make a potholder on the loom."
- "Leo gets frustrated when we talk about colors. Today he said he can't tell the difference between brown and green; they look the same to him."

To draw conclusions such as these, you must be sure your recordings are both objective and accurate. Objective and accurate recordings include only the full facts about what is seen and heard. They do not include labels or judgments. Compare the following excerpts from an observation of two 6-year-old children playing in the block area.

Example 1: Objective and Accurate

Behavior: *Jake places block on top of tall tower. Bill nearby, building house. Bill moves back, looks at house. Bumps into Jake's tower. Tower falls, loud noise. Jake says, "Look what you did." Bill turns around quickly, laughs.*

Example 1 is an objective recording. It includes only the facts:

- what Jake does ("places block on top of tall tower");
- what Bill does ("moves back, looks at house" and "Bumps into Jake's tower");
- what happened ("Tower falls, loud noise");
- what Jake says to Bill ("Look what you did."); and
- how Bill responds ("turns around quickly, laughs").

Accurate recordings include **all** the facts about what a child (or children) does and says in the order they happen. Information is not omitted or recorded out of order. Read the following two examples of recordings that do not include all the facts and are not objective.

Example 2: Not Objective

Behavior: *Bill bumps into Jake's tower on purpose. Laughs—thinks it's funny that Jake has to start over. Is mean to Jake.*

Example 2 is not an objective recording. A label ("mean") is used and judgments are made ("Bill bumps into Jake's tower on purpose," "thinks it's funny"). Given what the staff member saw, he or she could not know what Bill was laughing at or whether he is "mean." A recording that he was "mean" does not tell anything useful about his behavior, since "mean" is a word that signifies different things to different people.

Example 3: Not Accurate

Behavior: *Bill looks behind him, sees Jake building tower. Moves back, makes tower fall. Bill laughs and Jake says, "Look what you did."*

In Example 3 a fact is added that has not been observed ("looks behind him, sees Jake building tower"). A fact is omitted ("Moves back, looks at house"). And facts are written out of order ("Bill laughs and Jake says, 'Look what you did.'").

Developing observation skills takes practice.

Making an objective and accurate recording such as Example 1 requires practice. This skill can be developed during regular program activities. For example, as a staff member plays cards with a child, he or she may gain valuable information. A skilled individual takes the time to step back from his or her interactions to record that information. Opportunities for taking brief notes are present throughout the day. With practice, staff can complete recordings as they play with, interact with, and supervise children. Here are some examples.

Child: *Theresa* **Age:** *9 years* **Date:** *March 10*

Setting: *Drama area; Theresa and Erica are sitting near the puppet stage.*

Behavior: *Theresa holds up notepad. Says to Erica (7 years), "Yesterday I wrote a play about leprechauns. "I'll read it to you and then we can act it out." Erica sits and listens. Theresa reads play. Theresa looks in puppet box. Erica pulls out several puppets. Theresa says, "I want my play to be a puppet show, but there aren't any that look like leprechauns. Let's get some green stuff from the art area to make new puppets."*

Child: *Nathan* **Age:** *6 years* **Date:** *September 9*

Setting: *Near the entrance, in cubby area, at morning arrival time.*

Behavior: *Nathan and mother enter. He wears baseball hat, carries lunch box. Mother says, "Put your hat and lunch box in your cubby. Before I go to work you can introduce me to Gabriel." Nathan smiles. Puts things in cubby. Waves and calls out to Gabriel at game table. "Look, Gabriel. This is my mom." They walk to game table.*

Child: *Andy* **Age:** *12 years* **Date:** *May 10*

Setting: *Outdoors; Andy sitting under tree. On ground is sketch pad, pencil.*

Behavior: *Andy watches soccer game. Picks up pad, pencil, begins drawing. Jody walks by, says, "What are you drawing?" Andy says nothing. Jody comes closer. Andy holds up pad, says, "I'm drawing Eric dribbling the soccer ball. It's hard because I don't know how to make it look like he's moving."*

Child: *Lucas* **Age:** *8 years* **Date:** *October 3*

Setting: *Table set for self-service snack.*

Behavior: *Ms. Cafritz sets baskets of crackers next to juice pitcher and cups. Lucas grabs one, says, "I'm really hungry." Turns to Ms. Cafritz, says, "What can we put on the crackers? I'm starving." Ms. Cafritz points to peanut butter and cheese spread. Lucas reaches for peanut butter. Picks up knife, spreads peanut butter on crackers. Eats. "Now I'm thirsty. Peanut butter makes me thirsty." Pours juice in cup. Drinks juice in one swallow.*

Child: *Julie* **Age:** *5 years* **Date:** *February 14*

Setting: *Game table; Julie at table with parquetry blocks and patterns.*

Behavior: *Julie dumps blocks out of basket. Takes pattern card. Looks at card, puts it down. Moves blocks, picks up red diamond, places it on matching shape on card. Selects blocks to complete pattern, moves from upper left to lower right of card.*

Child: *Janet* **Age:** *7 years* **Date:** *February 17*

Setting: *Science area; Janet looking at box of sea shells.*

Behavior: *Janet takes all shells out. Hums. Sorts by size. Looks at shells on table. Picks up several small and two large that look alike. Puts together. Calls to Ms. Mason, "Look at this, I made a seashell family."*

Record your observations during program hours.

Some staff feel recording observations will take away from their time with children. At the end of the day, they try to jot down the things that happened. It is impossible, however, to remember accurately everything that took place: what each child did and said, or new skills children attempted. It is best to record observations during program hours as you interact with children or as soon as possible after the observation. You might ask a colleague to help cover an activity while you record children's interactions and behaviors. Work with your colleagues to develop a system and schedule for conducting regular observations of all the children in the program.

Here are some examples of staff completing recordings:

- Mr. Abrams joins Peter, Kia, and Carson on the outdoor basketball court. The children take turns practicing shots from the free throw line. After a few minutes, he suggests the children play a game of "Horse." Kim hasn't played before, so Mr. Abrams explains the rules. He steps aside and as the game progresses, he pulls a few index cards from his shirt pocket. He records the names of the players and a few notes on each child's skills.

- Ms. Donovan is helping Marisa set up a hand loom for a weaving project. Marisa looks for a yarn strong enough to use as a background. As Marisa sets up the loom, she makes sure the yarn isn't too loose or too tight. Several times she starts over. While the children put their materials and projects on the shelf, Ms. Donovan records on a note pad how Marisa persevered to set up the loom.

Checking Out Your Observations

In addition to recording in an objective and accurate way, staff members must be sure they see and hear what others see and hear. People often perceive the same situation differently. Eyewitness accounts of an accident demonstrate how several people, seeing the same event, have different stories to tell. This may happen to you as well.

For example, one person sees Barbara encouraging Suzanne to be in the talent show and offering to teach her some new dance steps. Another, watching the same children, observes Barbara angrily telling Suzanne that unless she dances the way Barbara tells her to, she won't be allowed in the show. Knowledge of what a child has done in the past, your feelings about a certain type of behavior, tone of voice, and many other factors influence what you observe and record.

It is useful to compare your recordings about a child with a colleague's observation information. If they are similar, an accurate record of a child's growth and development is being maintained. If they are very different, the information collected may not be useful. Two persons with different perceptions of a child's behavior should observe the child together over a short period of time. After each observation they can compare their recordings and discuss what they have seen. This method helps ensure accurate recordings. If the recordings still differ greatly, the program director or trainer can assist in solving the problem.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you practice observing and recording. You can use the form on the following page, or one of your own design. Select a child to observe over a one-week period. Observe the child for five to ten minutes, once per day. Ask your program director, a colleague, or your trainer to observe the same child at the same time as you, on at least two occasions. Compare your recordings after each joint observation and at the end of the week.

Make several copies of this form before recording your observations.

Observation Form

Child: ____________________ **Age:** ____________________

Observer: ____________________ **Date:** ____________________

Setting: ____

Behavior: ____

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If your recordings are objective, accurate, and similar to those of your co-observer, begin the next learning activity. If your recordings differ and are not objective and accurate, select another child to observe and repeat this learning activity. Ask your trainer to observe with you again and record information about the same child. Then discuss your recordings with your trainer and begin the next learning activity.

Learning Activity II.
Individualizing the Program

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use information gained through observation to define each child's interests, skills, and needs; and
- plan appropriate activities for each child.

High-quality school-age programs reflect and respond to stages of development and individual needs.

High quality school-age programs are based on two kinds of knowledge: the characteristics of children at this stage of development and the interests, skills, and needs of individual children. The environment, materials, activities, and interactions in such programs reflect children's developmental levels and respond to what makes each child a unique person. For example:

> The staff of the Horizon House School-Age Program know that most children enjoy being creative, making "real" things, and choosing what materials to use and how to use them. They apply this knowledge by stocking the art area with a wide variety of materials. In addition, they provide specific items that respond to individual children. For example, knowing that Carlos likes to draw cartoons, they include charcoal and colored pencils in the art area and books that show step-by-step techniques for drawing familiar cartoon figures. They also know Carlos is a "perfectionist" so there are erasers to use with different kinds of pencils and papers.

Including Children with Disabilities[2]

Getting to know a child with disabilities and that child's family is the first step toward meeting the child's needs. Planning for children with disabilities requires careful thought and often the assistance of specialists.

An individual child's development may vary greatly across domains, revealing greater or lesser degrees of skill in different areas. Within every category of disability, individual children will develop differently and the span of development will be even wider than in children who are not disabled. A 9 year-old child with Down's Syndrome may be very verbal, social, and able to read on a first grade level, or the child may be rarely verbal, or social, and unable to match picture cards.

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[2] Adapted with permission from Diane Trister Dodge, Judy R. Jablon, and Toni S. Bickart, *Constructing Curriculum for the Primary Grades* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1994), p. 28.

These steps can help you plan for successful inclusion.

It is very important to know the child's learning styles, likes, and dislikes, and how the specific disability may or may not affect the child's involvement in the program. The following steps will help you and your colleagues plan how to include a child with a diagnosed disability.

- **Consult with the child.** Find out whether the child would rather talk with you alone, or with a family member present. Ask what has helped in the past and how you can best support the child now.
- **Consult with the family.** While this is important for all children, families of children with special needs may have extra information to communicate as well as specific suggestions to share.
- **Consult with the child's teacher.** You might do this through the child's family or contact the teacher directly, with the parent's permission. It is important to learn what approach the school uses, what services the child receives, what accommodations are provided, the goals set for the child, progress made and so on. In addition, you will need to set up an ongoing system for sharing information that will allow the school and program to provide the most appropriate activities for the child.
- **Consult with a specialist.** Although the strategies for working with different disabilities may overlap, it is essential for you to have specific guidance on each type of disability. Seek advice from specialists to learn the most up-to-date instructional approaches.
- **Gather resources.** You can find or create the resources you need to mainstream and include all children. Resources range from a special education assistant hired to work in the program, to finding articles about special strategies to support the child's involvement in activities. Attending a workshop or asking your director to provide an inservice event might help you to acquire new skills to meet a child's special needs. You are not expected to address every child's needs without support and resources.

Learning About Individual Children

One of the most effective ways to get to know children, as described in the previous learning activity, is by using a system for observing and recording information. When you and your colleagues share information gained through observation you can confirm your impressions and create a total picture of each child. Parents can also help you learn about their children through informal conversations, interest surveys and questionnaires, and periodic parent-staff conferences. Of course, children themselves are also sources of information. Almost every interaction is an opportunity to learn more about a child. Children's skills and interests are constantly changing and growing—keeping in touch with each child is an ongoing part of your job.

Individualizing the program does not mean you have to provide separate materials and activities for each child.

Individualizing the program does not mean you have to provide a separate inventory of materials or plan special activities for each child in the program. Instead, you can respond to individual children during your regular planning process. Team members should review their observation notes and summarize children's skills, interests, and needs. As you plan for the coming week, think about what individual children might enjoy and plan ways to encourage their involvement in activities. For example:

> Mr. Addams says he has observed that Wanda always wins at checkers. His colleagues agree—they, too have noticed her skill. They think she might be ready for the more complex game of chess. However, they also know that Wanda is sometimes reluctant to try new things. She likes to win and it might take some time for her to be as good at chess as she is at checkers! Mr. Addams offers to give chess lessons to a small group. He will explain to Wanda that she might enjoy the challenge of learning to play chess. She can decide for herself whether to participate in the lessons.

Inventory should reflect children's current abilities and interests.

You can individualize the program through the materials and equipment you provide. In a typical school-age program, each interest area and the outdoors is stocked with a "basic" inventory. Throughout the year, as children grow, learn, gain skills, and develop new interests, the inventory changes to reflect current abilities and "passions." Some items are stored; new ones are added. Some examples follow:

- Luiz and his family recently moved here from El Salvador. He's learning to speak, read, and write, English. Ms. Logan added a Spanish-English dictionary to the quiet area.

- When the football season started, tag football became the favorite outdoor activity. To accommodate all the interested children, extra footballs were brought out of storage.
- Six-year-old Shanna is in the hospital having her tonsils out. Mr. Unger made sure there's plenty of paper and markers in the art area for children who want to make cards. He also brought out the health clinic prop box—several of the younger children want to play "hospital."
- Last week Justine tie-dyed an over-sized T-shirt. Several girls liked Justine's shirt so much they wanted to make their own. They brought in their own shirts and the tie-dye materials were left in place in the art area for an extra week.

Another way to individualize is to offer open-ended materials and activities that appeal to children at a wide range of skill levels. Children can choose the materials they want to use and decide how they want to use them. Different children can participate in different ways. For example, if you are going to make pizzas for snack one day, turn it into an open-ended activity. Each child can make a single-serving pizza, decide what shape to make the dough, what toppings to use, which seasonings to add, and so on. Another strategy that accommodates different skill levels is to plan an activity that has both basic and advanced elements. Some children can complete the basics while others pursue more advanced techniques. For example, one windy day you might decide to provide materials and instructions for making kites. Children could make plastic bag kites (a relatively simple project) or box kites (a more complex undertaking).

School-age staff play many roles.

School-age staff play many different roles as they interact with children in the program. These roles vary according to what you are doing and the individual children with whom you are interacting. The support and guidance you provide to each child is individualized. It is based on what you know about a child and what that child needs from you. For example, when giving instructions to a child who is easily distracted, you might sit close to the child, stop frequently to ask the child to repeat what you said, and ask if he or she has any questions. Giving instructions to a child who can focus with ease might be more direct—this is what you do, do you have any questions?

Each school-age program has a look and feel that matches the staff and children enrolled. You and your colleagues can individualize your program by getting to know individual children and using this knowledge to plan activities, select materials, and provide appropriate guidance and encouragement.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you practice your observation skills again by conducting periodic observations of three children for a week. Your recordings should include at least the information asked for on the form provided in Learning Activity I. You can use copies of that form, a notepad, or index cards.

Select three children to observe, one from each age group (5 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12). If you do not have children in each of these age groups enrolled in your program, select three children with as much difference in age as possible.

Observe each child for a five- to ten-minute period at least once a day. At the end of the week review your recordings to see what you learned about these children.

On the next page is an example of an "Individualization Summary Form." It shows what was learned from observations of three children and how the information was used. Read this example, then use your own recordings to complete the blank Individualization Summary Form.

Individualization Summary Form

(Example)

Child: *Ray* **Age:** *11 years* **Date:** *April 12*

How does this child usually play (alone, with several friends, in a group)?

Inside, he spends time alone doing homework, using the computer, or designing paper airplanes. He also joins in group art activities such as tie-dying. Outside, he joins in large group games and sometimes does things on his own.

What does this child like to do (favorite games, play materials, activities)?

He likes to get some of his homework done first, then he reads or works on his paper airplane designs. He likes special art projects that allow for creative expression. He likes organized sports, especially softball.

What kinds of activities does this child start, join in, or ask others to join in?

He likes to do most indoor activities alone. Outdoors, he often takes the lead and organizes the softball games.

What skills has this child acquired?

Ray has good reading comprehension (he likes to retell a story's plot for anyone who is interested) and can read for long periods of time. He follows written instructions well (like those in the paper airplane book). He applies his creative skills in airplane designs and in art projects (he has invented a number of unique knots for tie-dye). He uses leadership skills to organize softball games. He is a very accurate pitcher.

What can you do to build on the child's interests and skills?

I can suggest he write book reviews to post on the bulletin board in the quiet area where other children can read them. Also, I can provide additional books on a slightly more challenging level.

I can ask him if he would like to start a Paper Airplane Club and hold an airplane festival outside.

He might like to try rice paper dying, which is similar to tie-dying.

I can encourage him to help other children learn how to pitch.

Individualization Summary Form

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

How does this child usually play (alone, with several friends, in a group)?

What does this child like to do (favorite games, play materials, activities)?

What kinds of activities does this child start, join in, or ask others to join in?

What skills has this child acquired?

What can you do to build on the child's interest and skills?

Individualization Summary Form

Child: ____________ Age: ____________ Date: ____________

How does this child usually play (alone, with several friends, in a group)?

What does this child like to do (favorite games, play materials, activities)?

What kinds of activities does this child start, join in, or ask others to join in?

What skills has this child acquired?

What can you do to build on the child's interests and skills?

Individualization Summary Form

Child: ____________ **Age:** ____________ **Date:** ____________

How does this child usually play (alone, with several friends, in a group)?

What does this child like to do (favorite games, play materials, activities)?

What kinds of activities does this child start, join in, or ask others to join in?

What skills has this child acquired?

What can you do to build on the child's interests and skills?

Discuss your observation recordings and your plans for these three children with your trainer. If you found it difficult to complete your recordings, discuss why that was so, and try to find ways to record observations on a regular basis.

Learning Activity III.
Involving Parents and Children in Program Planning

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- use interest surveys to collect information about children's interests, skills, and needs;
- address survey results in program planning; and
- help children establish clubs that allow them to build on their interests and skills.

School-age children are constantly growing, changing, and developing new interests and skills. It is important for staff to stay in tune with children's changing needs in order to offer an interesting and dynamic program. Surveys, completed by both parents and children, provide information you can use to determine whether changes in the program are needed.

Parent Surveys

Generally, parents know their children better than anyone else. They have valuable insights into their children's strengths and needs, likes and dislikes, talents, abilities, and interests. Informal discussions at drop-off and pick-up times are an ongoing source of information about children. You can also gather information systematically through parent surveys. Surveys can alert you to areas where individual children need special help and guidance. They can help you stay in touch with new ideas, skills, and abilities children are developing through home, school, and community activities. At times, your perspective may differ from the parent's—you see the child in a group setting rather than in a home and family. Sharing these different perspectives helps parents and staff to work together to understand and guide each child more successfully. Parent surveys can also identify common interests, talents, and needs. The program can respond to these by revising the schedule, starting new clubs, or otherwise tailoring the program structure so it is appropriate for the children enrolled.

Here are examples of what you can learn about children through parent surveys:

- Bonnie is looking forward to summer camp. She'll miss the school-age program, but she'll have fun with her "camp" friends.
- Simon loves listening to his dad's stories about wild animals at bedtime. Together, they have filled several scrap books with pictures from magazines.
- Hannah gets frustrated when she tries to learn something new. When she doesn't succeed immediately she says, "Who cares about this anyway?" and walks away.
- Matthew is on a basketball team. He would like the chance to practice his skills.
- Liam, Jasmine, and Kendra are all pet lovers. Liam and Jasmine have cats, Kendra has a dog, and all three children wish they had more pets to care for.

Use open-ended questionnaires to solicit parent input.

Parent surveys can be conducted at the beginning of the program year and periodically as needed. The "Pre-Attendance Parent Information Survey" on the next page could be a part of the program's enrollment process. In addition, you can use open-ended questionnaires to solicit input from parents at appropriate points throughout the year. Here are some suggested questions:

- What do you like best about the program?
- In what ways is the program meeting your child's needs?
- In what ways is the program not meeting your child's needs?
- What would you like to change about the program, if anything?

Keep these questionnaires brief, ideally no more than one page. Parents are more likely to respond if the questionnaire can be completed quickly.

Pre-Attendance Parent Information Survey

Dear Parents:

We are looking forward to having your child in our program. In order to plan an exciting program of activities, we would like to know more about each individual child. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. You may want to discuss this with your child.

Parent's Name: ____________________ **Date:** ____________

Child's Name: ____________________ **Nickname (if applicable):** ____________

Age: __________ **Grade:** ______ **School:** ____________________

Family's Primary Language: __________ **Child's Primary Language:** __________

Mother's Phone Number: (home)______________ **(work)**______________

Father's Phone Number: (home)______________ **(work)**______________

These are my child's favorite activities:

☐ **Sports and Games**
Which ones?

____

☐ **Arts and Crafts**
Which ones?

____

☐ **Music and Dance**
List special interests and talents and types enjoyed.

____

☐ **Reading**
List types of books enjoyed, magazines and journals, special topics.

____

☐ **Plays and Drama**
List special interests and talents and activities enjoyed (i.e., puppetry, charades):

____

☐ **Building Things**
What kinds? (i.e., block building, Legos and similar construction materials, woodworking)

____

☐ **Nature**
What kinds?

____

☐ **Science**
What kinds?

____

☐ **Hobbies or Other Interests**
List any that are current.

____

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What new skills or interests would your child like to develop?

____

____

How would you describe your child's temperament?

____

____

What do you think are your child's best qualities?

____

____

How does your child react and adjust to new situations and new people?

____

____

Please describe your child's strong dislikes or fears (if applicable).

____

____

Please indicate what kinds of extra help or support your child may need.

____

____

What else would you like us to know about your child?

____

____

Gathering Information From Children

The most valuable sources of information about children's skills and interests are the children themselves. You can encourage children to offer input on the kinds of things they like to do and how the program should be operated (schedule, rules, how snack is served, new materials). In addition, watching, talking, and listening to children will help you learn about children's interests and about what they think needs to be changed.

The program can conduct periodic surveys to find out how well children's needs and interests are being met and what adjustments might be needed. Surveys can be a part of the enrollment process or conducted periodically during the year. If written surveys are used, keep in mind that older children may enjoy completing these on their own, but younger children may need assistance from a staff member or an older child. Older children might also use the survey to "poll" other children in the program and prepare a report on the results. Staff members could use the survey format to conduct "focus groups" with children, concentrating on a few questions or program areas each day. Or staff could use the survey to interview individual children.

Clubs let children explore special interests and skills.

Survey results can help you identify topics of special interest to children that might lead to planning and establishing clubs. Clubs are excellent vehicles for encouraging school-age children to explore a topic of interest. They give them the chance to develop and use new skills, and allow them to discover their individual talents. Clubs can be organized around almost anything that interests a small group of children in the program. They may meet several times a week for a month or more. If interest is high, they may continue for several months before children have fulfilled their goals and are ready to move on to something else. For example:

> When Ms. Benson reviews the results of a recent survey, she identifies a small group of children who are interested in comedians, clowns, and acting. Ms. Benson offers to help them form a club to learn more about clowning and perhaps to perform as clowns. Galen, who takes acting classes and performs in children's theater, helps lead the meetings. Ms. Benson provides books and other resources, invites a volunteer from the community theater group to talk with the children about clowning, and responds to the children's requests for costumes, make-up, and props. Over the course of six weeks, the children discuss different clowning styles, create their own costumes and make-up, and write and perform skits for the rest of the children.

Several children enjoy clowning so much they decide to offer their services at birthday parties.

Clubs that are often successful with school-age children include:

cartoons
acting
magic
paper airplane design
newspaper
environment
dancing
chess
mystery solving
kite flying
inventors
current events
cooking
pet care
card collecting
calligraphy
gardening
weaving

An example of a survey used to find out what children like to do appears on the following pages.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you survey the children in the program to determine their current needs and interests. You can use the questions on "What's Fun, What's Fabulous," or the "Planning Survey," or make up ones relevant to your program. Ask children to respond in writing, in small group meetings, or during one-on-one interviews. If you serve a wide age range, use a combination of approaches—older children can respond in writing and younger ones in interviews with you or an older child.

Next, use the survey results to help children plan and start a club. After the club has been meeting for two weeks, answer questions about what happened.

What's Fun? What's Fabulous?[3]

1. If you could do anything you want out of school, what would you do? Describe it, or draw a picture of yourself doing it.

2. What activity in the whole world would you most like to do?

3. What is your favorite thing to do out of school?

4. What is your least favorite thing to do out of school?

5. When you are not in school, what do your friends do that you wish you could do?

6. What are you good at?

7. What do you wish you could do better?

8. What do you wish you could do that you don't know how to do?

9. What do you like to do at school? Is there anything you don't like to do at school?

10. What do you do at school that you would like to do out of school?

11. What do you like to do around the house?

12. What do you like to do with your family?

13. What are your favorite things to do each season (winter, spring, summer, fall)?

14. What places (other than home and school) would you like to visit more often?

15. What's your best time of day and why?

16. What's your worst time of day and why?

[3] Adapted with permission from Joan Bergstrom, *School's Out* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1990), p. 39.

Club Planning Survey

1. What activity in the whole world would you most like to do?

2. Describe your least favorite thing to do when you are at home.

3. What do you do at school that you would like to do out of school?

4. What do you do well?

5. What do you wish you could do better?

6. What would you like to learn how to do?

7. Is there something you would like to teach other children to do?

Plan for a New Club

Focus: ____________________

Potential Club Members and Ages:

____

____

Purpose:

____

____

____

Activities:

____

____

____

____

Schedule:

____

Leader(s):

____

Resources:

____

____

____

Community Volunteers (if any):

____

____

Staff Responsibilities:

____

____

____

____

Over the next two weeks, use the plan to help children establish their club. Then answer the following questions.

Club: ____________________

How did the children respond to the club activities?

Did the club activities help children build on the interests they expressed in the survey?

What changes did you make to the original club plan?

What would you do differently if you offered this club again?

How could you work with the children to expand or extend the activities of this club?

Discuss your experiences helping children plan and implement a club with your colleagues and your trainer.

Learning Activity IV.

Working as a Team for Long-Range and Weekly Planning

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- develop weekly plans; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of your plan.

Planning helps you be well-prepared for each day.

Planning involves thinking about what you want to do and how you will do it. It means taking time to consider what activities to offer, what materials are needed, and how to support individual children. It also means each staff member must assume responsibility for carrying out the plans.

When you plan, you are better prepared. You have sufficient materials and children are involved in activities suited to their skills and interests. As a result, the program runs more smoothly.

All members of the team—staff, parents, volunteers, and children—can contribute to program plans. The more involved in planning everyone is, the more likely they are to realize the important role everyone plays in carrying out the plans.

In the planning process, there is a place for each team member's particular strengths, interests, and talents. Each member may have valuable observations, ideas, or concerns to contribute. An attitude of trust and respect enables each team member to communicate problems and to recognize and appreciate successes.

Long-range planning covers the coming year.

Two types of planning are useful for school-age programs: long-range planning and weekly planning. Long-range planning involves thinking ahead to the coming year. It includes an annual budget, planning for equipment purchases, and planning a variety of activities for each month of the year. For example, you know that the weather in May is warm, and children are likely to spend long periods of time outdoors. Therefore, you can think ahead to make sure you have sufficient equipment for sports and games and to plan outdoor activities that provide a wide range of choices. By planning ahead, you will be ready with the materials and equipment you need. Long-range planning also is necessary if you want to arrange a special event, such as a trip or a party. It is the best way to ensure that special events really happen.

School-age staff contribute to weekly plans.

Weekly plans are more detailed than long-range plans. Weekly planning does not need to be a lengthy process. In many programs, planning meetings take place before children arrive or after they leave. Staff members who work together need to plan together. In addition, it is important to invite children to participate in both planning and leading activities and to involve parents as much as possible. A planning form can be very helpful. In your program there may be a form everyone uses. You can use or adapt the form provided in this module.

Consider these planning categories.

The following planning categories may be useful for your program:

Special focus—a theme or topic emphasized during a given week that guides planning of materials and activities. For example, for the theme "traveling by airplane," staff could turn the drama area into a cockpit and passenger section; place books and brochures on air travel in the quiet area; encourage children to design, build, and decorate model airplanes in the art area; feature posters displaying the history of man and flight in the science area; and schedule a field trip to an airport.

Meetings—times to gather the children together to plan activities, sing songs, give performances, play games, solve problems, discuss issues; and scheduled club meetings.

Special activities—events planned for a small group of children or the whole group. Staff might plan a visit to a nature center or organize a wacky Olympics festival.

Outdoor activities—the choices offered to children in the program's outdoor space. Including the outdoors as a separate category encourages you to plan for outdoor activities as thoughtfully as you do for indoor ones.

Changes to the environment—the addition of new equipment or materials, or changes in the arrangement of indoor or outdoor space. For example, a display of pet care posters may be added to the nature area, or the easels might be moved to make room to set up a large net to be used for a weaving project.

Target children—those children who may have particular needs, skills, or interests you want to address during a given week. By targeting these children during the planning process, the team can design activities and materials to meet their needs. Target children may include a child whose parent will be away for several months. This child might need extra time with staff; books or pamphlets about the place where the parent will be; and an opportunity to tape a message, write a letter, or make a gift for the absent parent. To ensure confidentiality, it is best not to include this category in the written plan posted on the bulletin board.

Staff responsibilities—the assignment of specific tasks to each staff member to ensure they get done. For example, if the plan is to have children start a vegetable garden, someone must get the supplies (seeds, plants, and fertilizer) and gather the tools. It is important to agree on who will do what and to post a list reminding people of their assignments.

Knowledge of children's developmental and individual needs guides the planning process.

School-age staff have many tools and strategies they can use to help them plan. First, they know what children are typically doing at a given age and stage of development. Second, staff have specific knowledge about each child. Information gathered through observations and recordings, from conversations with parents, and from surveys (of parents and children) is invaluable in the planning process. Knowing, for example, a child is going on a trip may lead staff to add suitcases and books about trips to the drama area.

Daily observations provide important clues.

Staff members use yet another strategy that guides the planning process: they carefully observe how children use the environment. Daily observations provide important clues as to what changes are needed. For example, if a display of items found on a nature walk has been in the science area for several weeks, staff members may note there is little interest in the area. Putting some things away, adding new ones, or even changing the location of some items can spark children's interest. Observations also let staff know when something planned is not working. For example, if children are mixing up the playing pieces from board games and leaving them scattered on the table, they may need help learning the rules. Or if the games are left sitting on the shelf, they may be too challenging. These observations tell staff the children need a different variety of board games.

Special activities respond to children's interests.

Finally, staff consider what special activities they want to offer in a given week. These usually respond to the children's interests. For example, if a group of children is particularly interested in protecting the environment, staff might help them organize a recycling campaign. Others, who are more interested in singing and dancing, may enjoy producing their own video. Special activities may coincide with the time of year—in the fall, a trip to a pumpkin farm followed by cooking recipes that use pumpkin. They may also be related to local, national, or world news events—for example, reading about and watching the Olympics may lead to creating an Olympic festival. Staff also plan special activities they think children will enjoy—watching a magic performance, visiting a pottery studio, or making fresh pasta and sauce. The special interests or talents of staff members are valuable here. An adult's enthusiasm for music or cooking is quickly communicated to the children and can expand their interests.

Themes for special activities may be very focused—Chinese New Year, sports heroes, wire sculpture. Or, they can be open-ended, easily lending themselves to use in every interest area—What's Your Invention? (board game, recipe, sport, art technique); Going Places (food, music, crafts, dances, products, famous people); Making the News (school, program, world).

Evaluation is the last step in the planning process.

Evaluating the experiences you provide for children is an integral part of the planning process. After you have conducted activities, it is helpful to discuss the following questions:

What happened each day? What activities did children engage in? What did staff do to respond to children's questions, experiences, interactions? What activities did staff initiate? What activities did children initiate?

Which activities were successful and which were not? Which activities should be repeated? Which ones should be dropped? What might you do differently next time? Offer different materials? Provide more or less guidance?

What changes should be made in the environment? Should furniture and equipment be rearranged? Should new props, materials, equipment, and supplies be added?

How were children's individual skills, needs, and interests addressed? Did each child have many opportunities to choose materials and activities?

It is important to go through an evaluation such as this one during each planning meeting.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you review a sample weekly planning form. Then, with a colleague and several children, you will develop a weekly plan for your program. After using the plan you evaluate its effectiveness. Begin by reviewing the example. Agree on a time to hold a planning meeting with your colleague and the children. You can use the blank form that appears after the example or one of your choosing. Finally, implement the plan, then answer the evaluation questions provided.

School-Age Program Weekly Plan
(Example)

Week of: *May 10-14*　　**Special Focus:** *How Things Work*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Meetings	Group: Review week's events Jogging Club: 3:00-3:30 p.m. Drama Club: 3:30-4:30 p.m.	Jogging Club: 3:00-3:30 p.m. Magic Club: 3:30-4:30 p.m.	Group: New song, Marvelous Toy Jogging Club: 3:00-3:30 p.m.	Jogging Club: 3:00-3:30 p.m. Chess Club: 3:30-4:30 p.m.	Group: Speak Your Mind session
Special activities	Producing musical sounds (music student from college)	Making musical instruments	Bread baking	Behind-the-scenes tour of the building (with maintenance staff)	Use catalogues to plan garden, order seeds
Outdoor activities	Easel painting outdoors (with tempera, poster, water color paints)	Repairing your bike (cycling club volunteer)	Paper airplane flying contest	What to do in a lightning storm (Red Cross demonstration)	Draw layouts for garden (what will be planted in eacn row?)

Changes to the Environment

Drama Area Auto mechanics prop box TV repair kit	**House Corner** No changes this week	**Math** Graph paper, drafting tools, blueprints
Blocks and Construction Supplies for building functional machines	**Board and Table Games** Supplies for making up games	**Quiet Area** *3-2-1 Contact* (new science magazine) *How Things Work* (by David Macaulay) *Popular Mechanics* (back issues)
Outdoors Street hockey equipment	**Music/Movement** Rag-time tapes, scarves, hats	**Science and Nature** Pulleys, magnets, electric circuit, siphon
Woodworking Screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches Small machines and appliances (cords removed)	**Arts and Crafts** *How Paper Airplanes Fly* (book) Different kinds of paper for airplanes	**Miscellaneous** Seed catalogues Paper, envelopes, stamps (for ordering seeds)

School-Age Program Weekly Plan

Week of: ______________________ **Special Focus:** ______________________________________

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Meetings					
Special activities					
Outdoor activities					

Changes to the Environment

Drama Area	House Corner	Math
Blocks and Construction	Board and Table Games	Quiet Area
Outdoors	Music/Movement	Science and Nature
Woodworking	Arts and Crafts	Miscellaneous

Evaluating Your Plan

How did you (staff and children) work as a team to develop the plan?

What happened each day?

Which activities were successful and which were not?

How did children respond to changes in the environment?

How did the plan meet children's individual skills, interests, and needs?

What would you do differently next time?

Discuss your plan and your experiences in using it with the colleague and children on your planning team.

Learning Activity V.
Following Administrative Policies and Procedures

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- identify your program's administrative policies and procedures; and
- complete management tasks according to a schedule.

You are part of a large system.

As a school-age staff member, you are a part of a large system. Your role in this system includes coordinating with other staff, with parents, with your director, and possibly with schools and other agencies in the community. If you operate in shared space, you may also coordinate with a school principal, custodial staff, or other groups who also use the facility. You also need to know and follow the program's administrative policies and procedures. These policies and procedures usually address the following topics:

- hours of operation;
- acceptance/registration procedures;
- fees and service charges;
- safety requirements;
- medical and health requirements;
- fire prevention and evacuation procedures;
- policy on closing for bad weather;
- contingency plans for responding to emergencies;
- reporting accidents;
- using, ordering, and replacing consumable supplies;
- reporting suspected child abuse and neglect;
- reporting maintenance needs for furniture and equipment; and
- using positive guidance.

Policies and Procedures

All staff need to be aware of these policies and procedures so everyone follows the same regulations during the program's day-to-day operations. In addition, parents may seek answers to questions about discipline, accidents, or other issues. When staff know the procedures regarding such issues, they can provide parents with information or direct them to discuss an issue with a supervisor, when appropriate.

The program staff collect and maintain records and forms.

The program's policies and procedures also address your role in maintaining files. These records may include:

- child health examinations;
- observation recordings;
- daily attendance reports;
- parent contact forms;
- contagious disease exposure forms;
- medical emergency consent forms;
- weekly plan outlines;
- field trip permission forms;
- food service reports;
- inventory records;
- supply request forms;
- staff time sheets; and
- staff leave request forms.

To follow the program's procedures for reporting and recordkeeping, you may find it helpful to keep a list of necessary reports and the date each is due. Some reports are due daily or weekly. Others are completed when an incident occurs, such as an accident. Still others, such as inventory reports, are used once a month. Your role will vary according to the reporting task. Some information, such as observation recordings for children, may be collected and reviewed periodically by staff. Other reports, such as a summary of a parent-staff conference, may be completed by one staff member but kept on file in case other people need to review the information.

Your input can help improve the program.

Your knowledge of individual children and awareness of appropriate practice for school-age programs, can be applied to issues related to the overall program. You can talk with colleagues and management staff about ways to improve the program as a whole. Suggestions on staffing patterns, enrollment policies, and other practices and procedures will be welcomed by administrators whose goal is to provide a high-quality program that meets the needs of children, parents, and staff.

There are laws and regulations on including children with disabilities.[4]

The past several decades have seen a succession of federal, state, and local laws and regulations which require that children with disabilities be included in regular education settings. The landmark Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), more recently amended and reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), calls for a "free and appropriate public education" in the "least restrictive environment" for children with disabilities. And the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 extends the principles of non-discrimination to a wide variety of other settings with respect to people with disabilities, including school-age programs.

These legal provisions reflect the importance of "supplementary aids and services" (e.g., classroom aides, consultations, or resource services) to achieve the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular programs. The law requires state and local regulations to ensure that staff "are provided with the technical assistance and training necessary to assist them in this effort" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1991). You should always seek the advice of specialists when addressing needs that may be beyond your expertise or experience.

When successfully executed, the inclusion of children with disabilities in a school-age program can be a very rewarding experience for everyone involved. Inclusion provides an environment in which all children can succeed. It helps children with disabilities to gain independence and autonomy; enables all children to develop comfortable, fair relationships with others; and teaches all children to resist stereotypes, name calling, and overcoming other barriers when they appear. Children with disabilities are children first. They thrive in an environment that accepts differences and where adults strive to meet each child's individual needs. For more information on this Act, contact the Department of Justice Hotline at (202) 514-0301 (voice) or (202) 514-0381 (TDD) in Washington, DC or the Child Care Law Center at (415) 495-5498 in San Francisco, California.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you review your program's administrative policies and procedures for completing various kinds of reports. Then you complete a schedule indicating when these reports are due and what your responsibilities are with regard to completing them. Begin by reading the example of a report schedule on the next page.

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[4] Adapted with permission from Diane Trister Dodge, Judy R. Jablon, and Toni S. Bickart, *Constructing Curriculum for the Primary Grades* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1994), p. 27.

Report Schedule

(Example)

Report	Staff Responsibility	Date Due
Observation and recordings	*Record observations according to schedule*	*Review with team members on last Friday of each month*
Attendance	*Record attendance for group*	*Every Friday*
Time sheet	*Fill in hours worked each day*	*Every Friday*
Supply requisition	*Request consumable supplies when inventory is low*	*15th of each month*
Annual leave request	*Request leave*	*Two weeks prior to date for which leave is requested*
Contagious disease exposure	*Complete form when parent notifies staff of child's illness*	*By 6:00 p.m. on the day parent notifies me of illness*
Inventory	*Record quantities of equipment, toys, and consumable supplies*	*May 30*

Report Schedule

After reviewing your program's policies and procedures, list below the reports required, staff responsibilities for completing them, and when they are due.

Report	Staff Responsibility	Date Due

Discuss this schedule with your trainer. If you need additional space, duplicate this form. Review and follow your program's administrative policies and procedures throughout the year.

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you develop new managerial skills. Before you go on, take a few minutes to summarize what you've learned.

- Turn back to Learning Activity II, Individualizing Your Program. Review the recordings completed for the children in your group. Why are they examples of objective and accurate recordings? How did you use this information to individualize the program for these children? How did you use this information in your weekly plans?

- Next, review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to learn more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. After you have successfully completed them, you will be ready to start a new module. Congratulations on your progress so far, and good luck with your next module.

ANSWER SHEETS

Being an Effective Manager

Observing and Recording Information About Each Child's Growth and Development

1. **How did Mr. Munson use a regular activity to gather objective and accurate information about Graham?**

   He recorded what Graham did and said during an experiment at the science table.

2. **What did Mr. Munson learn about Graham?**

   a. He likes to experiment.
   b. He can use his discoveries to make choices and decisions.
   c. He understands cause and effect.
   d. He can solve problems.
   e. He is independent and resourceful.
   f. He likes to make up tunes.
   g. He likes to talk about what he learns.

Working as a Member of a Team to Plan an Individualized Program

1. **How did Ms. Wang and the staff use a team approach to planning?**

   a. Ms. Wang asked staff members to gather information about how children use the quiet area.

   b. Staff collected information through observations and conversations with children and parents.

2. **How will the staff use the information they collected to plan an individualized program?**

   a. They will repair or replace the headphones so Telma and other children can listen to music.

   b. They will provide homework supplies needed by children such as Darnell.

   c. They will involve the older children in selecting new magazines that will address their interests.

Following Administrative Policies, Practices, and Procedures

1. **How does Ms. Jacobs stay informed about administrative policies and procedures?**

   a. She reviewed a chapter in the Staff Handbook and read the Volunteer Handbook.

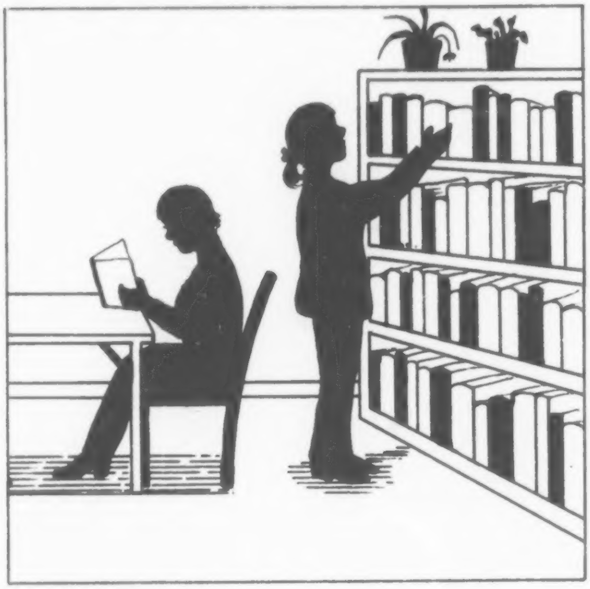
   b. She discussed certain procedures with a colleague.

2. **What tasks did Ms. Jacobs complete according to the program's policies?**

   She met with the new volunteer to discuss the kinds of activities he might want to lead and to review policies on the role of volunteers at the program.

GLOSSARY

Administrative policies and procedures	Written descriptions of the program's systems for operations and the steps involved in completing all tasks.
Colleagues	The staff members with whom you work in the school-age program.
Individualized program	A program in which the environment, materials, activities, and interactions with children are suited to each child's interests, skills, and needs.
Objective recordings	Written information that includes only the facts about behaviors seen and heard.
Systematic observation	Consistent watching, listening to, and recording of what children say and do, according to a particular method.



Module 13:

PROFESSIONALISM

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OVERVIEW

MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONALISM MEANS:

- continually assessing one's own performance;
- continuing to learn about school-age children; and
- applying professional ethics at all times.

School-age staff provide professional services.

A professional is a person who uses specialized knowledge and skills to do a job or provide a service. As someone who guides the growth and learning of children during out-of-school hours, you are a member of an important profession. You work with children during the years when they are increasingly interested in exploring the world beyond home and family. You help them master new skills; learn to solve problems; build relationships with others; develop creativity; and become resourceful, responsible, and independent individuals. The care and guidance you provide affects how children feel about themselves. These experiences enable children to see themselves as competent individuals. They are then more likely to make good decisions and succeed in life.

Professionals continue to learn and develop new skills.

Professionalism means applying what you know about school-age children to offer a diverse program of activities. Professionals take advantage of opportunities to learn more about children and to develop and continually improve new skills. They continually assess their work and are open to fresh ideas and new perspectives.

As a professional in a school-age program, your role includes supporting families. When parents have confidence in the reliable, high-quality care you and your colleagues provide, they can feel better about themselves as parents. Their own job performance is also improved, because they know their children are participating in a safe, interesting, and challenging school-age program. And the information and insights you share with parents promote a sense of teamwork.

When you need a service (such as medical or legal advice, electrical repairs), you look for a professional business or individual who can meet your needs. You choose professionals because you want:

- the needed service;
- specialized knowledge;
- a commitment to quality;
- dependability; and
- effectiveness.

In all these areas, staff of school-age programs make unique professional contributions. They provide:

- the needed service—a high-quality out-of-school program;
- specialized knowledge—an understanding of what school-age children are like and how to meet their needs appropriately;
- a commitment to quality—a developmentally appropriate program in a safe and healthy environment;
- dependability—service on a regular basis; and
- effectiveness—a program that helps children learn more about the world, explore special interests, develop self-discipline, become independent, and gain lifelong skills.

Stages of Professional Development

Lilian Katz, an early childhood educator, has studied how teachers grow professionally. Her research suggests they pass through four different stages of professional development, each of which is briefly described below. Although you are not in the traditional role of a teacher, it is likely these stages apply to your professional development, too.[1]

Stage One: Survival

Staff are new and often insecure. They devote most of their attention to learning the program's routines and performing tasks as assigned. If you are at this stage, you may have these feelings. Orientation, training, and experience will help you move to Stage Two, **consolidation.**

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[1] L. G. Katz, "Teachers' Developmental Stages," in *Talking with Teachers: Reflections on Early Childhood Education* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977), pp. 7-13.

Stage Two: Consolidation

Staff become more confident and begin to look beyond simply completing the daily routines. They seek new ways to accomplish routine tasks and to handle problems. If you are at this stage, you will find it useful to exchange ideas with other school-age professionals, for example, at conferences and workshops. Conversations, staff meetings, training sessions, and open discussions will help you grow and move to Stage Three, **renewal.**

Stage Three: Renewal

After a year or two on the job, staff may begin to be bored with the day's routines. Their interest and enthusiasm may fall. If you are at this stage you may need new challenges. Try to attend conferences and workshops, participate in professional organizations, or pursue a special interest. These professional activities will provide needed stimulation and help you move to Stage Four, **maturity.**

Stage Four: Maturity

Staff at this stage are committed professionals. They understand the need to seek new ideas and skills and continue to grow professionally. If you are a mature school-age professional, you can be a model for new staff. You might also seek new challenges as a director or trainer.

You are part of a profession that requires many different kinds of skills. In your work you fulfill the roles of educator, child development specialist, recreation leader, health care advisor, and nutritionist. Your work is important to the children you care for, their families, and the community.

Maintaining a commitment to professionalism has several positive results. First, it builds your self-esteem. You feel proud when you learn new skills, acquire knowledge, and become more competent. The sense of success you experience as you become a competent school-age professional builds confidence and is rewarding and fulfilling.

Second, when you provide a professional program, you are helping children grow, learn, and develop to their full potential. And third, your professional behavior helps the field of school-age care. As you and your colleagues provide a high-quality program for children, you build respect for the profession, which can result in more recognition and support for the important service you provide.

Listed on the following pages are examples of how school-age staff maintain a commitment to professionalism.

Continually Assessing One's Own Performance

Identify areas where their own performance could be improved. "I've tried several strategies to help Jason express his feelings with words, instead of his fists, but they're not working. Maybe this article will give me some new ideas."

Review their own performance against written procedures and guidelines. "I know I should never leave the children unsupervised. I'll wait until Mr. Tansky returns before I go to the supply room."

Identify and apply their unique skills and experiences to their work. "I really enjoy my volunteer work at the animal shelter. I think I'll ask the children if they're interested in volunteering there, too."

Use professional standards as guides for providing high-quality care. "This publication describes the elements of a high-quality school-age program. We can use it to evaluate our program and to plan improvements."

Continuing to Learn About School-Age Children

Participate in professional organizations and training activities. "I'm going to attend this conference to learn more about how to meet individual needs in a group setting."

Keep current about procedures and guidelines concerning school-age children.

Read books and articles to keep informed about new programming ideas for school-age children. "I'd like to attend that workshop on community service opportunities for school-age children. Several children have expressed interest in volunteering."

Apply knowledge and skills on the job. "Helping Julie make friends was much easier after I read the article on building positive group interaction. The ideas in the article really worked."

Talk with and observe colleagues to learn more about working with school-age children. "I've arranged to observe how Ms. Baker runs a group meeting because I can't seem to keep my group together like she does."

Develop and follow short- and long-range plans for professional development. "I'm planning to finish this module by the end of the month. I'll finish all thirteen by the end of the year."

Applying Professional Ethics at All Times

Maintain accurate, confidential records and keep information about children and their families confidential. "The files we keep on each child are confidential, Mrs. Gomez. Rudolpho's file will be kept in our locked cabinet. Only the program staff, you, and your husband are allowed to read his file."

Are honest, dependable and reliable in performing their duties and responsibilities. "Boy, I'm tired this morning, but I won't call in sick because I know the children are really looking forward to the Drama Club we're starting today."

Treat each child as an individual and show no bias because of culture, background, abilities, or gender. "Billy and Robert, you have been using the woodworking area for quite a while. Marcia wants to make a birdhouse, too, and it looks like there's room for all of you. Would you please share the tools with her?"

Speak out against practices that are not developmentally appropriate. "We don't want to force Sam to play softball if he doesn't want to. Many children prefer games that are less competitive."

Stand up for parts of the program they believe are appropriate for the children. "Mr. Davis, having the chance to make some choices about what she would like to do is important to Sarah. It allows her to explore and work on things that interest her and helps her develop a sense of responsibility for her own actions."

Support other staff when they need assistance. "I'd be happy to help you work with the older children to set up an area they can use as a stage, Mr. Bailey. Just let me know when you're ready."

Support parents and treat them with respect at all times. "You're right, it does seem like only yesterday that Kelley first started in the program. I think she may be ready for some more independence at the program and at home."

Model positive language and communication skills. "Spending every day with school-age children makes it hard not to pick up their slang. I try to model standard vocabulary, however, so they'll hear the language they're likely to use when they are adults."

Dress appropriately for the job. "I brought my boots so I could go outside with the children who want to go sledding."

Take care of their own physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs. "Tonight I'm having dinner with a close friend. I always feel energized after being with her."

Maintaining a Commitment to Professionalism

In the following situations school-age staff are maintaining a commitment to professionalism. As you read them, think about what the staff are doing and why. Then answer the questions that follow.

Continually Assessing One's Own Performance

As Ms. Chavez watches the children get on the school bus, ten-year old Julie pushes past Luther, a first-grader. Julie yells to her friends, "Save me a seat." Her push makes Luther lose his balance and step on Demian's foot. Ms. Chavez reacts without thinking. She gets on the bus yelling, "Julie, you're the most inconsiderate child I've ever seen. Get off the bus and go to the end of the line." The other children stare as Julie walks down the aisle. Ms. Chavez continues shouting.. "You'll wait like everyone else. I'm sick and tired of you picking on younger children." By the time the bus leaves Ms. Chavez is hoarse and has a headache. She walks back inside, thinking to herself, "I really handled that poorly. Julie was out of line, but so was I. My response was out of control!" Knowing it won't help to feel sorry for herself, Ms. Chavez sits down to reflect on the situation. She says to herself, "Tomorrow I will apologize to Julie and the rest of the children. I'll make it clear that her behavior was inappropriate; but I'll also tell her I'm sorry I lost control." Ms. Chavez's reflections lead to several conclusions. She writes them down, along with her plans for change: "I'm tired at work because I don't get enough sleep. It's very late by the time I cook dinner, help Aseem with his homework, and get to bed. I will call a family meeting to talk about reorganizing our evenings so I'm not up so late. Also, as the youngest in my family, I was picked on frequently, so I'm very sensitive when I see similar behaviors. In the future, when older children are unkind to the younger ones, I'll use positive guidance to help children learn to treat each other with respect."

1. How did Ms. Chavez assess her own performance?

____

____

____

____

2. What did she decide to do with the results of her assessment?

____

____

____

____

Continuing to Learn About School-Age Children

Mr. Sullivan completes a self-assessment for school-age professionals, then meets with his supervisor, Ms. Abrams, to identify three areas where he could improve his skills. They discuss what might be reasonable goals. Mr. Sullivan decides to review a module on guidance (one of the three areas) during the following month and attend the in-service training session on the same topic. Ms. Abrams schedules a time to observe and offer suggestions for improving the way he provides guidance to children. They plan to meet again in a month to discuss progress on the plan and how Mr. Sullivan's skills improved.

1. **How did Mr. Sullivan decide what knowledge and skills he should work to improve?**

2. **How did Mr. Sullivan plan to expand his existing knowledge and skills?**

Applying Professional Ethics at All Times

Ms. Perkins arrives to pick up her child, Danny, at the end of the day. As she walks in, she glances disapprovingly at Billy, one of the children playing with her son. In a loud voice, she declares, "I've seen Billy wearing that old sweatshirt every day this week." Ms. Johnson walks over to Billy, puts her arm around his shoulder, and says, "This sweatshirt is Billy's favorite. It feels comfortable, like an old friend." Then Ms. Johnson turns to Ms. Perkins and says, "Ms. Perkins, come on over here for a minute and let me tell you about Danny's day."

1. How did Ms. Johnson maintain professional ethics in talking to Danny's mother?

2. How did Ms. Johnson interact with Billy in a positive manner?

Compare your answers with those on the answer sheet at the end of this module. If your answers are different, discuss them with your trainer. There may be more than one good answer.

School-Age Care and You

Each person has special interests and abilities.

Each school-age professional, just like each child, is a unique person with special interests and strengths. You bring your own interests and skills to your profession, and you share them with the children in the program. Whether a person shares a love of music or a love of the outdoors, the children pick up on his or her enthusiasm and learn to appreciate something new. By using special interests on the job, you can make your work more satisfying and fun.

You also bring your unique personal style to your work. Some staff have boundless physical energy; others are calm and easygoing. Both styles are valuable. The important thing is to look at your own personal style and consider how it affects your interactions with the children in the program.

What are your special abilities and interests? What do you most enjoy? Which personal qualities enhance your work as a school-age professional? Which ones sometimes make your work more difficult? What do you like best about your job? What would you like to change? These are questions school-age professionals can ask themselves to identify what makes them unique and what special qualities they bring to the profession.

The reading that begins on the following page will help you think about yourself and the reasons why you became a school-age professional.

Being Curious About Yourself[2]

Who are you? What do you care about? Why are you here? What interests you about school-age children? What gives you pleasure in being with them? Which of your interests do you enjoy sharing with them? How do you use your talents to contribute to their growth and development? What are your goals for them?

Does all this seem obvious—of course you know about yourself? In fact, most of us keep growing in self-understanding, and we learn in the same way we learn about other people—by observing ourselves and reflecting on our observations. Why did I get so mad when Kim accidentally turned up the volume on the stereo? Did it trigger something in me that had little to do with what happened? Why do I find it so hard to like Kim? I catch myself being almost mean to her—sarcastic, in a way that just isn't appropriate for someone who works with children. Why do I do that?

Sometimes a friend or colleague can help us think through our self-observations if we're willing to share them. It can be uncomfortable, learning more about ourselves, especially about the parts of ourselves we really don't like. Some people seek counseling to get help with this process. They want someone to listen thoughtfully to their question about themselves.

What do you like to do with children? Sing, cook, play sports and games, help them develop new skills and discover their talents, listen and talk with them about their ideas and concerns, watch them play and explore new interests, provide help and encouragement when they have problems? Do you get to do what you like to do on your job? If not, could you? As you spend each day with children, it's important to have many opportunities to make decisions, to say, "This is what I want to do next." Not at the children's expense, but in response to both your needs and theirs. If staff are contented and growing, children are more likely to be contented and growing, too.

Which describes you better: You like nurturing children; you like teaching children; you like playing with children? Competence in working with school-age children may be based on any of these preferences. Nurturing is being responsible, taking good care of children, appreciating their growth; if you're experienced as a parent, that may be the role you fall into naturally in this field. Teaching implies particular interest in children's thinking and problem solving, in what they know and understand—and in helping them learn. Playing with children implies being in touch with the child in yourself.

What kind of learner are you? How do you learn best? People learn in different ways—by reading, taking classes, observing children's behavior, discussing their experiences with colleagues and friends, going to conferences and workshops, trying things for themselves and seeing what happens. Which of these things work for you? Does your program encourage you to keep learning and give you credit for what you do? A school-age program is a *living place* for children and adults. It should be a good place to live together and learn about the world. What are you learning at your work? How are you continuing to grow? What risks are you taking?

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[2] Adapted with permission from Elizabeth Jones, "The Elephant's Child as Caregiver," *Beginnings* (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, 1986), p. 10.

Taking a Look at Yourself

Think about how you feel about your work. Take time to consider what you really want to say. Reflection is an important part of being a professional.

Now answer the questions that follow.

I think I'm really good at:

I really enjoy:

I can share my interests and skills with children in the following ways:

What I find most difficult about my work is:

I would like to be better at:

I would like to know more about:

Discuss your responses with two colleagues. Have they learned anything new about you? Do they see things you did not see? Use the space below to write what you learned from reflecting on your role as a school-age professional.

When you have finished this overview section, you should complete the pre-training assessment. Refer to the glossary at the end of the module if you need definitions for the terms used.

PRE-TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the skills school-age staff use to maintain their commitment to professionalism. Think about whether you do these things regularly, sometimes, or not enough. Place a check in one of the boxes on the right for each skill listed. Then, discuss your answers with your trainer.

	I Do This		
Continually Assessing One's Own Performance	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
1. Identifying areas where performance needs improvement.	☐	☐	☐
2. Reviewing performance against written procedures and guidelines.	☐	☐	☐
3. Identifying and applying personal skills and experiences in working with school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
4. Using professional standards as guides for providing high-quality care.	☐	☐	☐
Continuing to Learn About School-Age Children			
5. Joining and participating in professional organizations and training activities for school-age staff.	☐	☐	☐
6. Reading books or articles on child development and appropriate programming for school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
7. Talking with and observing colleagues to learn more about working with school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
8. Applying knowledge and skills on the job.	☐	☐	☐
9. Keeping current about procedures and guidelines concerning school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
10. Developing and following short- and long-range plans for professional development.	☐	☐	☐

	I Do This		
Applying Professional Ethics At All Times	Regularly	Sometimes	Not Enough
12. Maintaining accurate records and keeping information about children and their families confidential.	☐	☐	☐
13. Carrying out duties in an honest, dependable, and reliable way.	☐	☐	☐
14. Speaking out against practices that are not appropriate.	☐	☐	☐
15. Supporting program practices that are developmentally appropriate for school-age children.	☐	☐	☐
16. Showing no personal bias against any child enrolled in the program.	☐	☐	☐
17. Supporting colleagues when they need assistance.	☐	☐	☐
18. Supporting parents and treating them with respect at all times.	☐	☐	☐
19. Modeling positive language and communication skills.	☐	☐	☐
20. Dressing appropriately for the job.	☐	☐	☐
21. Taking care of your own physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs.	☐	☐	☐

Review your responses, then list three to five skills you would like to improve or topics you would like to learn more about. When you finish this module, you can list examples of your new or improved knowledge and skills.

Begin the learning activities for Module 13, Professionalism.

13

PROFESSIONALISM

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. Assessing Yourself 391

II. Continuing to Learn About Working With School-Age Children 397

III. Applying Professional Ethics at All Times 410

IV. Becoming an Advocate for Children and Families 418

V. Taking Care of Yourself 424

Learning Activity I.
Assessing Yourself

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize your unique skills and abilities; and
- use the profession's standards to assess your own competence.

Professional Standards for School-Age Programs

Every profession sets standards for performance. Your program has written statements of its philosophy, policies, and procedures. You should become familiar with these statements. These standards are not meant to restrict you. Instead, the standards are guides; in using them, you, other school-age professionals, and parents can confirm you are providing high-quality care.

In recent years, several national organizations have developed standards that describe quality school-age programs. Three of these statements of quality are described below.

Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality (ASQ), Wellesley Center for Research on Women, School-Age Child Care Project (SACCProject), 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8259, (617) 283-2547

> This self-study process uses a team approach to collect information on program effectiveness from staff, parents, and children and to develop plans for improving program practices. *ASQ* materials include a Leader's Manual, Questionnaires for staff, parents, and children, and a Program Observation Instrument that outlines elements of quality. The *ASQ* instruments are reliable and valid; they incorporate 15 years of research, training, and technical assistance by the SACCProject. *ASQ* describes indicators of quality in five categories: human relationships, indoor environment, outdoor environment, activities, and safety, health, and nutrition. In partnership with the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA), *ASQ* is being used as the basis for a national improvement and accreditation system.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs, Project Home Safe (completed), American Home Economics Association, 1555 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Available through each Military Service and School-Age NOTES, (615) 242-8464.)

> This publication identifies principles and components of programming that reflect the characteristics and needs of school-age children included at the end of the Orientation to this training program. It incorporates pertinent criteria from *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs for Children from Birth Through Age 8*, developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Those criteria were reviewed, refined, and expanded by a national panel of school-age care experts. Examples of developmentally appropriate practice in 14 areas are included: interactions, activities/experiences, social-emotional development, physical development, aesthetic development, scheduling, group composition, homework support, parent involvement, staff qualifications, administration, group size and staffing, environment, and nutrition and food service. A companion document, *Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care Programs*, specifies indicators of high quality in key program components.

Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care, National Association of Elementary School Principals (in collaboration with the Wellesley College School-Age Child Care Project), 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483 Attn: Educational Products (703) 684-3345

> Directed at elementary school principals, this publication sets forth standards for designing and operating school- and community-based programs. The standards address the role of the school, human relationships, activities and time, and administration. Appendices provide a checklist for applying the standards and suggestions for further reading.

Reviewing these documents and completing the pre-training assessments for each module should give you a comprehensive picture of your skills and capabilities. This review will also help you identify areas you need to know more about and skills you need to develop or improve.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you read excerpts from three documents that describe standards for quality in school-age programs. Next you discuss with a colleague how the standards apply to your program and your role as a school-age professional.

Standards for Quality

The outdoor environment is an important part of school-age programs. Read the following standards for the outdoor environment then discuss with a colleague how they apply to your program and how they affect your role as a school-age professional. Record your thoughts below.

From *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Programs*, Project Home Safe, page 32:

> Outdoor space is accessible to the program and is protected from access to streets and other dangers. When play areas are accessible to the public, clear boundaries are identified to children and youth and supervision of enrolled children and youth can be maintained.

From *Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care*, Project Home Safe, page 18:

> G-10a. Outdoor areas facilitate a variety of activities throughout the year.
>
> There is a variety of surfaces such as soil and sand for digging; grass for rolling; hills and fault sections; hard areas for bicycles, skateboards, and roller skates; and space for ball games.
>
> There is a balance of shade and sun.
>
> There is a variety of age-appropriate equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play.

From *Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care,* National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Wellesley College School-Age Child Care Project, page 34:

> Role of the School: Outdoor Space
>
> Standard: Outdoor space is adequate in size and has enough equipment and activity choices to offer a variety of safe challenges for children.
>
> Quality Indicators:
>
>> Outdoor space is adequate, with at least 75 square feet per child.
>>
>> The space is clean, safe, and protected from traffic, unwanted visitors, and environmental hazards.
>>
>> Separate areas exist for: active games, sports and running; quiet play; climbing and swinging; extra choices, which might include gardening, fort building and other self-initiated activities.
>>
>> There is enough equipment that children don't need to crowd or argue over it.

The equipment is age-appropriate to offer safe challenges for the children.

The area and equipment are adapted to children with special needs (for example, pull tunnels for children who can't use their legs, sandboxes high enough for children in wheelchairs, rigid swing seats and straps to hold children who need support.)

From *Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality* (ASQ), Wellesley College School-Age Child Care Project.

Program Observation: III. Outdoor Environment (pages 20-21)

13. The outdoor play area is suitable for a wide variety of activities.
    a. There is enough outdoor space for a number of activities to go on at the same time without crowding.
    b. The outdoor space is clean and comfortable.
    c. The outdoor space is arranged so that different activities do not interfere with each other.
    d. The outside play space is easily accessible to the program.
14. The outdoor equipment allows children to be independent and creative.
    a. The permanent playground equipment is suitable for the sizes, interests, and abilities of all children.
    b. Children have easy access to a variety of portable sports equipment and games to supplement permanent equipment.
    c. There is enough equipment so that children have a number of choices for both active and quiet play.
    d. There are materials to promote children's creativity and imagination.

Questions for the Director: III. Outdoor Environment (page 8)

6. The outdoor space meets the needs of the children and staff.
    a. There is at least 75 square feet of outdoor space per child.
    b. There is adequate storage for outdoor sports and play equipment and supplies.
    c. Sharing of outdoor space with other groups does not restrict the children's activities.
    d. Other outdoor areas are used to offer new outdoor play experiences.

Standards for Quality: Discussion

Which standards for outdoor space are met by your program?

Which standards for outdoor space are not met by your program?

What can you and your colleagues do to improve the outdoor space used by your program?

Meet with your trainer to discuss ways to implement the suggestions developed by you and your colleagues. If your program does not have copies of the documents described in this activity, ask your director to order them.

Learning Activity II.

Continuing to Learn About Working With School-Age Children

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- continue to expand your knowledge and skills; and
- make short-and long-range professional development plans.

Continued learning has many benefits.

No matter how many years you've worked with school-age children or how much you already know, it is important to continue to learn more about your profession. This is true for a number of reasons.

There is always new information to be learned. All professionals need to keep up with the latest developments in their fields. Research and experience often lead to new, more effective strategies for working with children. Learning and growth are ongoing for the school-age professional.

Continual learning makes you an active, thinking person. School-age staff who are always learning new things are more interesting people. They have new ideas to bring to the program to inspire children. If you enjoy learning, you probably help children enjoy learning, too.

You care about children. Each article or book you read, every discussion you participate in, and every conference you attend, gives you new insights or helps you resolve nagging problems. Because you care about all children, you are always alert for new and helpful information relating to their development. Suppose, for example, a child with a disability joins your group. You may seek to learn new ways to include this child in the program's activities.

You want to grow professionally. A commitment to continue learning can lead to improved performance. Learning results in a greater confidence and may also lead to more responsibility, a promotion, and a salary increase.

Continual learning is affirming. You may rediscover ideas you'd tucked away. The process of learning tends to affirm the good work you've been doing and the knowledge you already have.

There are many ways to continue learning.

How can you continue growing and learning professionally? In addition to participating in this training program for school-age staff, there are many other ways you can continue learning. You might:

- join professional organizations;
- read books and articles;
- network with other professionals in the field;
- observe colleagues in action; and
- take advantage of training opportunities.

Professional organizations help keep you up-to-date.

Professional organizations help you keep up-to-date on the latest information and current issues in the profession. Many have local affiliates that meet regularly. These organizations offer newsletters, books, videotapes, brochures, and other publications with useful information and helpful tips. Attending professional conferences puts you in contact with other professionals who share your interests and concerns.

School-age child care is a relatively new field. There are numerous program models, implemented by a range of organizations, with varied goals and philosophies. Some programs operate in shared space, others have their own centers. Sponsors include public schools, youth-serving organizations, child care programs, and recreation departments.

NSACA is your professional organization.

The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) is the professional organization that unites the individuals and groups who serve children and youth in their out-of-school hours. NSACA focuses on the issues and concerns of school-age professionals. It provides a national training conference, a newsletter, and other networking opportunities. The national conferences are held in conjunction with state school-age organizations. Professionals can join NSACA as individual or state affiliate members. NSACA is taking an active role in establishing standards and a national accreditation system for school-age programs and defining competencies for school-age staff. For membership information, write to:

P.O. Box 676
Washington, DC 20044-0676
202-737-6722

The following are some other professional organizations that address issues of interest to school-age professionals.

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD)
1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
(703) 476-3400

This organization includes national associations for those concerned with health and safety education, intramural sports, aging, fitness research, physical education, athletics, dance, school nursing, outdoor education, and recreation. AAHPERD provides publications, research, and special projects. The Student Action Council encourages student involvement. National associations include:

- American Association for Leisure and Recreation
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education
- National Association for Girls and Women in Sports
- Association for the Advancement of Health Education
- National Dance Association
- Association for Research, Administration, Professional Councils, and Societies
- Leisure Services

American Camping Association (ACA)
5000 SR 67N
Martinsville, IN 46151-7902
(317) 342-8456

This organization works to increase the quality of organized camping activities in the United States. Members include individuals involved professionally in camping, camp clientele, and different kinds of sponsors such as private, youth-serving churches, and nonprofit organizations. ACA holds an annual national convention and publishes *Camping Magazine*.

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
11501 Georgia Avenue, Suite 315
Wheaton, MD 20902
(301) 942-2443

ACEI, established in 1892, is represented in all 50 states and in many nations abroad. The association addresses the care and education of children from birth through adolescence. There is a separate division for Later Childhood/Early Adolescence. Publications include a newsletter, research journal, and numerous books. ACEI holds an annual national conference.

National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force
733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1037
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 737-7700
(800) U-R-WORTHY [(800) 879-6784]

This nonprofit advocacy organization, formerly the Child Care Employee Project, works to improve the wages, status, and working conditions of child care professionals. Organized in 1977 by child care workers, the center provides assistance to child care providers, parents, policymakers, and the media on issues that affect the child care workforce. A quarterly newsletter and a variety of materials on child care employee issues are available.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 232-8777 or (800) 424-2460

With more than 90,000 members, NAEYC is the largest early childhood professional organization in this country, providing resources and support for meeting the needs of children from birth through age 8. NAEYC publishes *Young Children* (a journal of ideas, findings, and issues concerning children) and a variety of books, posters, and other media materials. Their annual national conference offers professional training on a range of topics, including a track devoted to school-age care. Conference attendees can meet other school-age professionals as well as writers and researchers on child care and child development. NAEYC has 360 affiliate groups working locally, statewide, and regionally on behalf of young children. The national headquarters can provide information on local affiliates.

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)
1023 15th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281

NBCDI advocates on behalf of the growth and development of African-American children. It organizes and trains networks of members to voice concerns regarding policies that affect children and their families. NBCDI sponsors an annual conference focused on critical issues in child care development, education, foster care and adoption, and health. NBCDI also publishes *Black Child Advocate,* a quarterly newsletter.

National Community Education Association (NCEA)
3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401
(703) 359-8973

NCEA advances the idea that the educational resources of a community should be available to learners of all ages and educational backgrounds. This organization supports the concepts of community involvement in public education and interagency cooperation to meet the learning and human service needs of community residents. Forty state community education associations are affiliate members of NCEA.

National Institute for Hispanic Children and Families
2000 Rosemont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20010
(202) 265-9885

This group considers the child care needs of Hispanic children and analyzes how those needs compare with the needs of other children. The group also reviews and assesses legislation affecting children and their families.

National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA)
850 S.W. 15th Street
Corvallis, OR 97333-4145
(503) 737-2088

The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to the establishment and development of high-quality recreational sports programs and services. Representing thousands of individuals and organizations, NIRSA serves as the leading advocate for excellence in recreational sports. NIRSA provides access to educational resource materials as well as a professional network. Ensuring that those involved in recreational sports remain up to date is a prime concern for NIRSA. Through professional support materials and sponsored projects, NIRSA enhances the quality of campus and community recreation.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
2775 South Quincy Street, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22206
(703) 820-4946

This nonprofit service, research, and educational organization has membership opportunities for professionals, volunteers, students, and organizations. Through branch organizations and state regional organizations, active involvement is encouraged. A variety of services and publications are offered according to the branch of membership. Branch affiliations include:

- National Student Recreation and Park Society
- National Therapeutic Recreation Society
- Society of Park and Recreation Educators
- American Park and Recreation Society
- National Society for Park Resources
- Armed Forced Recreation Society
- Citizen and/or Board Member
- National Aquatic Section
- Leisure and Aging Section

School-Age Child Care Project (SACCProject)
Center for Research on Women
106 Central Street
Wellesley College
Wellesley, MA 02181
(617) 283-2547

Since 1979, this project has conducted research, designed educational programs and conferences, and provided consultation and technical assistance. Services are used by a broad range of individuals concerned with school-age child care: parents, employers, school personnel, elected officials, policymakers, researchers, program directors, and school-age staff. The SACCProject is a source of books, technical papers, and videos for school-age professionals. Project staff also lead training workshops and provide technical assistance on all aspects of school-age care.

World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA)
P.O. Box 309
Sharbot Lake, Ontario KOH 2PO, Canada

WLRA is a central service office for the world's recreation agencies. Through field service, conferences, and publications, it provides opportunities foi exchange of international ideas and programs. Student scholarships to attend international conferences are available.

You can read books and articles.

Books and articles can help you expand your knowledge and skills. The following are good sources of current books and articles on working with school-age children:

Gryphon House
P. O. Box 207
Beltsville, MD 20704-0207
1-800-638-0928

Redleaf Press
450 North Syndicate, Suite 5
St. Paul, MN 55104-4125
1-800-423-8309

School-Age NOTES
P.O. Box 40205
Nashville, TN 37204-0205
(615) 242-8464

School-Age NOTES has served as a national resource organization on school-age programs since 1980. It publishes a monthly newsletter for school-age professionals and has a catalogue of many kinds of program resources.

A list of other helpful resources can be found in the bibliography in the Orientation to this training program. The public library may have some of these titles. Check in both the adult and children's collections.

Networking is a way to share ideas and get support.

Networking is spending time with people who perform similar tasks to share ideas, information, and experiences. It is a good way to identify solutions to problems, gain new knowledge, or help colleagues cope with difficult situations. You can network with one other person or with a group. Group networks can include other school-age professionals at the local and state levels. Meetings can be very informal, perhaps after work or on a Saturday. They can also be formal, with speakers and a detailed agenda. What is important is that school-age staff have opportunities to meet, share ideas, and get support in coping with the demands of their jobs.

Observe colleagues in action to gain a new perspective.

You can learn a lot by observing a colleague, a supervisor, or someone in another program. Because each person is unique, you can learn new approaches to solving discipline problems, implementing a multi-age activity, or making effective use of shared space. Colleagues and other professionals also may have interesting new ideas for activities and programs.

Participate in training on topics related to your job.

Training is a good way to keep up to date and develop new skills. As you complete each module in this training program, your knowledge of the characteristics of school-age children and how to work effectively with them will grow.

In addition, you can attend courses offered by community groups. Training workshops or conferences may also be available in your area through federal, state, or local funding. Often these training programs are administered by the local or state office of the Department of Social Services, an Office on Child Care Services, a County Extension Office, or other government agencies. In many areas community colleges offer certificate programs for school-age professionals. Individual courses at colleges and universities may also be an option.

Planning for Continued Learning

In addition to identifying resources to help you learn more about school-age care, you need to plan how and when to use those resources. When you develop a plan, you clarify what you want to achieve—your goal—and how you will go about achieving it. With a written plan in front of you, you feel like you're already making progress. And you are! Knowing where you're going and how you're going to get there makes it easier to take each step and to recognize your goal when you reach it. As you complete each step and check it off your plan, you know you are moving closer to your goal.

You can continue to improve your skills in the following ways:

- Take advantage of opportunities that come your way. Attend workshops and training offered by your program or other groups.
- Use other colleagues as resources and offer yourself to them as a resource.
- Consult your supervisor about theoretical issues and practical concerns.
- Seek information from national or regional school-age care and recreation groups.
- Review how you manage your time. If you look closely at what you do each day, you may find some time-wasting activities. Doing things faster or better may leave extra time for reading, studying, and reflecting on how the day went.
- Set specific goals for yourself. Try to do something on a regular basis to fulfill them.

Applying Your Knowledge

There are two parts to this learning activity. Begin by reviewing your answers to "Taking a Look at Yourself" in the overview section of this module. Pick one item from your responses to "I would like to be better at" or "I would like to know more about." Consider the sources of assistance available to you: the public library, workshops, professional organizations, your supervisor, and other colleagues. Identify specific resources to help you with the task or topic you selected. List what you find on the chart that follows.

Taking Another Look at Yourself

I want to improve or learn more about:

Resources I can use:

Source	Contact Person
Public library	
Workshops	
Professional organizations	
Trainer/colleagues	

The chart you just completed helped you think about resources that are readily available to you. Next, use this information to make short- and long-range plans for professional development, identify possible barriers to reaching your goals, and plan ways to overcome them. For the short term you might focus on areas you think most need improving. For the long term you could build on an area of strength and become even more skilled. Read the example on the following page, and complete the chart that follows.

Plans for Professional Development

(Example)

Short-Range Plan

What would I like to do right away to improve my skills?

Take a workshop on conflict resolution.

Learn more activities children can do outdoors, in addition to sports and games.

Complete Module 7, Creative.

What barriers might hinder me from completing these plans?

It's hard to find time to complete the learning activities and still care for children.

If I'm the only one who knows about conflict resolution, it will be difficult to implement it in our program.

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

I can talk with other staff about trading some responsibilities so we can all have more time to work on the learning activities.

I'll talk to other staff members and try to get them to join me in taking the workshop.

Long-Range Plan

What would I like to be doing a year from now?

Begin work on a degree in child care administration.

Join one professional organization.

Complete the school-age modules.

What barriers might hinder me from completing these plans?

I have no time to attend school.

I can't afford to pay tuition.

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

I can take one or two courses at a time rather than a full load.

I can find out about student loans and scholarships, and I can check with local training agencies about other ways to take for-credit courses.

Plans for Professional Development

Short-Range Plan

What would I like to do right away to improve my skills?

What barriers might hinder me from completing these plans?

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Long-Range Plan

What would I like to be doing a year from now?

What barriers might hinder me from completing these plans?

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Discuss your plans with your trainer. What barriers can you overcome? Agree on an overall plan to achieve your short- and long-term goals.

Learning Activity III.

Applying Professional Ethics at All Times

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- follow the ethics of the school-age profession; and
- identify examples of professional and unprofessional behavior.

Professionals do what is right rather than what is easy.

As discussed in Learning Activities I and II, being a professional involves assessing one's knowledge and skills and continually building on them. But professionalism is more than having expertise. It has to do with how you apply your knowledge and skills daily as you work with parents, children, and staff. It means doing your job to the best of your ability. And it includes your actions in the program setting and in the community.

Ethics are the principles, standards, or guidelines that direct acceptable behavior. Professionals need to follow the ethics of their profession, rather than what is easy. Professionals are committed to doing what is best for all children under their supervision, on every occasion. Here are some examples.

Ethics of School-Age Care	Professional Behavior	Unprofessional Behavior
Maintaining confidentiality about children and their families. Not discussing children with parents other than their own. Restricting conversations to times when children are not present.	Discussing a child's problem confidentially with colleagues or the supervisor, and trying to identify ways to help the child. *"Ms. Kim, sometimes when Tommy loses his temper he's aggressive with the other children. Do you have any suggestions for helping him express his anger in acceptable ways?"*	Talking about a child in front of the child or with a parent other than the child's. *"Did you see what a wild temper Tommy has? I'm glad you're the kind of parent who disciplines her kids at home so they don't act up at the program."*
Being honest, dependable, and reliable in performing duties. Being regular in attendance and performance. Coming to work on time, returning from breaks on time, and performing duties on schedule.	Arriving at work every day on time and prepared to perform assigned duties. *"I'll be ready to go home after I finish wiping these tables."*	Paying more attention to adults than to children. Calling in sick unnecessarily, arriving late, or not doing assigned duties. *"You'll have to watch these kids yourself. I have to call my girlfriend so we can make plans for tonight."*

Ethics of School-Age Care	Professional Behavior	Unprofessional Behavior
Treating parents with respect even during difficult situations.	Talking to a parent who always comes late about the problem this causes and discussing possible solutions. *"Mrs. Lowell, our program closes at 6:30. If you can't get here by then, could someone else pick up Jennifer?"*	Getting angry at a parent who is late and demanding he or she do better. Talking to other parents or acquaintances about parents. *"This is the third time you've been late this week. I need to go home too you know!"*
Treating each child with respect regardless of gender, culture, or background. Treating each child as an individual; avoiding comparisons.	Comforting a child who is hurt or upset. Including activities and materials that reflect the cultures and backgrounds of all children. *"It's okay to cry if you are hurt. Do you want to tell me about it?"*	Teasing children if they cry. Asking one child to behave just like another child. *"You always get in a bad mood when your team doesn't win. Why can't you just smile and forget about it like Jim does?"*
Making sure activities, practices, and routines are developmentally appropriate.	Allowing children to participate in routines according to their personal schedules. *"Randy, I can see you are very involved in your project. Snack is set out on the counter. You can serve yourself when you're ready."*	Making all children do the same activities or routines on a strict schedule. *"I can't help it if you're not ready for snack yet, Sabrina. This is when snack is served. If you don't take some now, you'll have to be hungry later."*
Providing a good model for learning and for language and communication skills. Never using profanities in front of children.	Giving children clear directions that show respect for their activities. *"The interest areas will be ending in about ten minutes. It's time to begin cleaning up now."*	Speaking rudely to children, using harsh words and a negative tone. *"Didn't I say we can only spend 20 minutes on this activity? Get this room cleaned up. Now!"*

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Ethics of School-Age Care	Professional Behavior	Unprofessional Behavior
Dressing to do the job. Being conscious of dress, grooming, and hygiene.	Wearing comfortable, clean clothes (ones you can sit on the floor in, bend and lift in, and move quickly in when necessary), so you can play with and care for children. *"I'm most comfortable in wide skirts or slacks that let me sit on the floor easily with the children."*	Wearing clothes that hinder movement and that you have to worry about. *"You'll have to ask Ms. Peterson to help you. I can't walk on the grass in these shoes."*
Recording information appropriately.	Keeping good records to aid in making accurate reports to parents. *"Lori's mother said she really likes our activity check-in system. It helps her find Lori quickly, and it gives her an idea of the kinds of things Lori has done this afternoon."*	Not taking the time to record needed information because it's too much trouble. *"No one ever reads accident reports. I'm just wasting my time filling one out."*
Advocating on behalf of children, families, self, and others. Letting others know the importance of child care work.	Joining a professional organization. *"I'm really glad I joined NSACA. Their newsletter really helps me stay in touch with new ideas in the field."*	Belittling the work of school-age staff as "only babysitting" or denying it is a profession. *"As soon as I can, I'm going to get out of this babysitter job and get a real one."*

In this activity you list examples of how your professional behavior conforms to the ethics of high-quality school-age care. Then you read several case studies and write down what a professional would do.

Applying Professional Ethics

Ethics of School-Age Care	Examples of Your Own Professional Behavior
Maintaining confidentiality about children and their families. Refusing to discuss children with parents other than their own. Restricting conversations to times when children are not present.	
Being honest, dependable, and reliable in performing duties. Being regular in attendance and performance. Coming to work on time, returning from breaks on time, and performing duties on schedule.	
Treating parents with respect even during difficult situations.	
Treating each child with respect regardless of gender, culture, or background. Treating each child as an individual; avoiding comparisons.	
Making sure activities, practices, and routines are developmentally appropriate.	

Applying Professional Ethics
(continued)

Ethics of School-Age Care	Examples of Your Own Professional Behavior
Providing a good model for learning and for language and communication skills. Never using profanities in front of children.	
Dressing to do the job. Being conscious of dress, grooming, and hygiene.	
Recording information appropriately.	
Advocating on behalf of children, families, self, and others. Letting others know the importance of child care work.	

Ethics Case Studies[3]

After reading each ethics case study, write down what you think a school-age professional would do. Then plan a time to discuss your responses with your trainer and a group of colleagues. Discussion points are provided at the end of this module. There can be more than one ethical response to each case study.

1. The Abused Child

When 8-year-old Martha arrived at the program this morning, she had a large bruise on the back of her leg. This is the second time you've seen a bruise like this one. Her mother, who seems nervous and tense, says Martha gets bruises because she's going through an awkward stage and is always bumping into things and falling down. Yet you've never seen Martha do this at the program. When Martha comes back after school, she seems very withdrawn. When her father picks her up at the end of the day, he seems impatient and angry. Martha gathers her belongings very quickly and quietly. She and her father do not speak to each other. You are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate authorities. However, you've heard that when authorities get involved, things often get worse: they don't seem to be able to help the children and families. In fact, one of your friends said some abusers get angry and take it out on the child because they think the child reported their behavior.

What should a school-age professional do?

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[3] Adapted with permission from Stephanie Feeney, "Ethical Case Studies for NAEYC Reader Response," *Young Children* (Washington, DC: NAEYC, May 1987), pp. 24–25.

2. The Overwhelmed Parent

Ms. Donovan, wants her son Joey to spend his time in your school-age program doing homework. Joey is in fifth grade this year and has a lot of assignments every night. Ms. Donovan is a single parent who works during the day and takes courses at night. She says she has no time to help Joey with homework and wants to be sure it's done before she leaves for class. She is sure he will "goof off" and not complete his work at home with the teenage babysitter. Ms. Donovan is adamant that Joey should begin his work as soon as he arrives at the program—no playing around. If he finishes all his work before she arrives, then he can play, but not before then.

What should a school-age professional do?

3. The Angry Child

Ten-year-old Bobby and his family recently moved to the area. On his first day in the program, he told you and the other kids, "Leave me alone and don't touch my things." Bobby is big for his age, with an athletic build. When children try to play with him or move through "his space," he gets angry very quickly—often hitting people or throwing things at them. You tried a number of positive guidance strategies, discussed the situation with your colleagues, and asked for your director's assistance. Nothing seems to work. You have mentioned the problem to his parents several times, but they think he's just getting used to living in a new place. They refuse to seek counseling for Bobby. A school-age specialist from the Department of Mental Health has observed Bobby, but her recommendations have not helped either. Meanwhile, the other children and parents are starting to complain. You are becoming stressed and tired, and your patience is wearing thin. You and your colleagues spend so much time dealing with Bobby that you worry the other children are not getting the attention they need.

What should a school-age professional do?

4. The Neglectful Colleague

Cathy Johnson has been working with you for about six months. During this time you have become friends and see each other outside of work. Cathy is full of energy and enthusiasm and has lots of skills to share with children. She contributes creative ideas in program planning sessions and has a talent for making even the most ordinary day seem exciting. Today Cathy was responsible for supervising the activities in the gymnasium. Mrs. Juniper arrived early to pick up her son, Thomas, and you directed her to the gymnasium where he was playing volleyball. You reminded Mrs. Juniper to be sure to tell Cathy that Thomas was leaving. Mrs. Juniper came back a few minutes later with Thomas and said, "I looked for Cathy so I could tell her we were leaving, but she wasn't there. Thomas said Cathy went to call her mom." You know the program does not allow staff to leave children unsupervised. You also know Cathy's mom has been very sick, and Cathy's frequent calls cheer her up.

What should a school-age professional do?

5. A Trip to the Bowling Alley

You take a group of children to the bowling alley. After bowling a few games, you run into some older children who are there alone. Ten-year-old Martin, one of the children in the school-age program, sees his older brother Neil and asks if he can go home with him. You don't have the program records with you, so you don't know if Neil is authorized to pick up Martin from the program. Neil insists their mother and father would not mind if Martin came home with him. He says convincingly, "We go places together all the time. My parents leave me in charge of Martin whenever they go out."

What should a school-age professional do?

When you have completed both parts of this activity, plan a time to discuss your responses with your trainer and colleagues. These are difficult situations to handle, and it will help you to discuss your ideas with others.

Learning Activity IV.

Becoming an Advocate for Children and Families

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the importance of being an advocate for children and families; and
- become involved in advocacy efforts.

Advocacy is working for change. This often means speaking out on issues that may affect children and families or on issues that affect your own working conditions. Often, decisionmakers aren't aware of the problems and issues related to providing programs for school-age children. Without awareness and understanding, change is not possible. As a school-age professional, you are in a good position to help others appreciate important issues and concerns.

How You Can Become an Advocate[4]

A first step in becoming an advocate is to understand the importance of advocacy. This means recognizing how public and private policies affect children's lives and accepting that children need a strong voice to ensure the programs they attend support their development. Advocates must ask themselves: "What can I do to ensure adequate attention to children's needs by policymakers, elected officials, administrators, schools, businesses, and other groups?" Answering this question requires making a commitment to act.

Advocates try to improve the circumstances of children's lives so they get what they need to grow to their full potential. School-age professionals are well-informed on this issue in terms of both theory and practice. Advocates commit themselves to sharing their knowledge with others. They move beyond good intentions and take action, overcoming the fear of becoming involved. Because they realize the problems faced by children and families are a collective responsibility, they are willing to act on their concerns.

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[4] Adapted with permission from Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi, *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988), pp. 2-5.

As a school-age professional, you can become an effective advocate for children and families in at least six ways, as described below.

1. Share Your Knowledge

Your professional beliefs and knowledge are based on understanding all aspects of child development, on experience working with children, and on relationships with parents. Therefore, you can help those who develop policies to understand the developmental needs of children and the characteristics of safe and supportive environments. You can help decision makers understand the link between policy and enhancing children's development. As an advocate, you can become a catalyst for change.

2. Share Your Professional Experiences

You work with children and their families daily. You know when a family is under stress. When children and families receive services from community agencies, you can make a judgment as to whether children's needs are being met. As a result, you have the opportunity—and a professional responsibility—to share the personal stories that give meaning to group statistics. Personal experiences help professionals become more persuasive. Without sharing confidential information, school-age professionals can describe how policies affect children and families.

3. Redefine the "Bottom Line" for Children

The debate about programs for children is often tied to other policy issues such as welfare, job training, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy. Funding for children's programs is often seen as an investment in children's future productivity.

Joining children's issues with broader political issues and social concerns is an effective political technique. It can expand the base of support and help frame children's issues in ways that are consistent with accepted social values.

Your unique perspective on children makes you an effective advocate for children's inherent "worth." You understand that childhood is a crucial time for development. If policies for children and families are devised solely on the basis of "return on investment," children will suffer when investors seek a higher return or decide to pull out of the "market." School-age professionals must remember these strategies are simply means to achieve a desired end. They must not undermine the "bottom line" of advocacy—encouraging policies that promote children's healthy development.

4. Stand Up for Your Profession

School-age care is a growing profession that provides a valuable service to children and their families. Therefore, school-age staff need to speak out on behalf of the profession—and for the special expertise required of a professional who works with children ages 5 through 12.

Many people don't know that providing out-of-school programs for this age group requires a professional knowledge base or that the quality of the program depends on the training and compensation of professionals in the field. School-age staff know how it feels when others view them merely as "babysitters" rather than as professionals. They need to share these stories, too. For example, one school-age staff member took a group of children to a public swimming pool when the pool was open to other patrons. The mother of a child who was not enrolled in the program asked her to "babysit" for her child while she went to the bathroom. The staff member politely responded, "I'd like to help you, but I am not these children's babysitter. We are from a professionally operated and staffed school-age program. I cannot watch your child because that would put me over the maximum number of children I can supervise."

Advocacy efforts on behalf of school-age programs are most effective when professionals emphasize the benefits of their work for children and families. School-age program staff must begin to exercise their own power to speak out on issues that affect their profession.

5. Involve Parents

Your daily interactions with parents provide many opportunities to share common concerns and goals for children's well-being. You are in a unique position to help parents recognize their power as children's primary advocates—for both their own and other people's children.

Parents can be especially effective advocates on behalf of their children. They represent a critical consumer voice. By involving parents, you can dramatically expand the group of people speaking out for children.

6. Expand the Constituency for Children

School-age professionals may have ongoing relationships with other individuals and agencies that provide services for children and families: public school administrators and teachers, health care providers, religious organizations, youth agencies, child care providers, and professional and volunteer groups. These interactions provide natural opportunities to inform others about the developmental needs of school-age children, appropriate programming for this age group, and the supports that families need.

You can take these advocacy actions.

You can choose from many courses of action once you make a commitment to become an advocate for children, their families, and your profession. Here are a few choices:[5]

- Share ideas for appropriate practice with other professionals and parents (instead of just observing disapprovingly).
- Explain to parents why children need time to relax, unwind, and play during school-age programs (instead of complaining parents are too concerned about homework and academics, or giving in and requiring children to spend much of their time studying).
- Help parents recognize that participating in recreational sports and leisure activities may lead to lifelong interests for their children (instead of complaining because parents don't seem interested in their children's activities).
- Exercise your democratic rights by voting for the candidate of your choice (instead of telling yourself that one vote can't make a difference).
- Advocate for local funding and support for school-age programs (rather than accepting that there is "not enough money" to provide children with a high-quality program in a well-stocked, appropriate environment).
- Learn how the legislative process works (instead of thinking you can't make a difference because you don't know how).
- Establish and/or participate in organizations of school-age professionals (instead of feeling frustrated by your isolation and wishing you had colleagues to call or meet with).
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine to respond to an article or letter (instead of just complaining about how other people don't understand the needs of children, their families, or those who work in school-age programs).
- Meet someone new who is interested in working with school-age children, and ask her or him to join one of the professional

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[5] Adapted with permission from Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi, *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988), pp. 14-15.

groups listed in Learning Activity II (instead of just wondering why that person isn't involved).

- Write to your state or federal legislators about a pending issue and share your experiences as a way to point out needs (rather than just assuming someone else will write).
- Ask a friend to go with you to community meetings where issues of concern to children and families will be discussed (instead of staying home because you don't want to go alone).
- Volunteer to represent your professional group in a coalition to speak out on the educational and recreational needs of school-age children (instead of waiting to be asked or declining because you've never done it before).
- Work and learn with others. For example, join with colleagues at your program to write a position paper on a critical issue, such as why older children still need supervision or how programs like yours can help children develop the self-esteem they need to resist using drugs or alcohol (instead of saying "I don't really know much about this topic").
- Volunteer to speak at a school board meeting about professional standards for school-age programs (instead of resigning yourself to the fact that your school system doesn't understand much about the needs of children in the elementary and intermediate grades).

Applying Your Knowledge

In this activity you consider your own feelings about advocacy and develop a plan for becoming an advocate. Review the suggestions included in this learning activity, then answer the following questions.

Becoming an Advocate

What contributions would you like to make as an advocate for school-age children, families, and your profession?

What obstacles might prevent you from being an advocate, and how can you overcome them?

Describe below an advocacy step you can take this month:

Describe below an advocacy step you can take within six months:

Describe below an advocacy step you can take within a year:

Discuss your responses with your trainer.

Learning Activity V.
Taking Care of Yourself

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- recognize the importance of taking care of yourself; and
- take care of yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

School-age staff need to be in good health.

Although your first responsibility as a school-age professional is to take care of the needs of children, you also have a responsibility to take care of yourself. All you have to give is yourself—your energy, your ideas, and your commitment. You cannot do this when you are not at your best. To work successfully with school-age children, you need to be in good physical and emotional health. You also need to feel you are appreciated, meaningfully connected to others, intellectually stimulated, and performing a job worth doing. Taking care of yourself means considering your needs and well-being in four areas: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual.

Physical well-being is very important to a person who works with school-age children. Without physical stamina, good health, and a good diet, you are not prepared to work with school-age children every day. Your overall health is influenced by three key factors: eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly.

Your **emotional well-being**—the way you feel about yourself, your work, and the world—affects how you interact with the children and adults around you. The more positive you feel about yourself, the better you will be able to care for children. If you start to feel worried or depressed, it is good to talk with family and friends about your concerns.

Having people to talk to is essential for survival and **social well-being**. A trusted person with whom to share your joys, frustrations, concerns, and ideas, as well as successes can be very important in determining how you feel about yourself as a person and as a professional. The person may be a colleague, spouse, relative, or friend. What is important is that you have someone (at least one, but preferably several people) with whom you can exchange ideas, feelings, resources, and moral support.

Most of us enjoy learning something new and being challenged. Like children, our **intellectual well-being** increases with ongoing exploration, experimentation, and problem solving. The more you learn about working with school-age children, the more satisfying your work will become. This is what professionalism is all about.

In Module 2: Healthy, we discussed how stress affects children and what you and your colleagues can do to reduce children's stress and help them cope in positive ways. Most adults also find that stress—at work and in their personal lives—is a part of their daily routines.

The sources of stress in your life may differ from those of your colleagues. A situation one person finds stressful may not be for another. For example, you may feel very anxious when you get caught in traffic on your way to an appointment; a colleague might sit back, review his plans for the day, and enjoy listening to a new tape. Stress on the job may also affect you and your colleagues. Work-related stress might be due to situations such as:

- disagreeing with a colleague or supervisor;
- running out of materials in the middle of an activity;
- working with children who have many problems in their lives; or
- supporting a parent whose problems are overwhelming.

Some work-related stress can be alleviated through effective communication, improved adult-child ratios, or revised management practices ("From now on, we'll make sure we have sufficient supplies for the activities we plan to offer.") Other stressful situations are "part of the job." Working with school-age children is a challenging job. Even the most qualified and highly-skilled staff experience days when their jobs seem overwhelming.

How we respond to stress can affect our physical, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being. Some examples follow:

- Responses affecting your physical well-being might include:
  increased pulse, racing heart
  increased or decreased appetite
  excitability, hyperactivity
  always feeling tired
  difficulty relaxing, trouble sleeping
  difficulty staying awake

- Responses affecting your emotional well-being might include:
  - feelings of inadequacy
  - lowered self-esteem
  - sadness, mild depression
  - fear of losing control
- Responses affecting your social well-being might include:
  - clinging to others
  - withdrawing from others
  - feeling angry with yourself and/or others
  - being unusually impatient
  - experiencing mood swings
- Responses affecting your intellectual well-being might include:
  - having racing thoughts
  - forgetting how to solve simple problems
  - thinking about performing routine tasks (e.g., getting ready for work in the morning) rather than doing them automatically
  - forgetting important events or responsibilities
  - being easily distracted

It's almost impossible to eliminate all of the sources of stress in our lives. Instead, we need to cope in healthy ways so the stress does not lead to "burn-out." The responses listed above are "messages" that tell us we need to take better care of ourselves. The suggestions for helping children handle stress that appear in Module 2: Healthy, may also be useful for adults. Many people find eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, spending time with friends, and taking time to meet their own needs, can help them manage their stress.

When people don't cope with their stress, these responses may continue for a long time. For example, if a person is forgetful for a few days while handling a difficult situation, there is no cause for alarm. If the forgetfulness continues for weeks or months, the individual may need professional assistance. A mental health counselor can help the individual talk about the situation and learn to cope with stress in healthy, positive, and personal ways.

Applying Your Knowledge

In this learning activity you assess how well you are taking care of yourself. Record your activities for two days. For Day 1 record your activities for today. Then, review your answers, consider areas where you could take better care of yourself, and try to be better to yourself tomorrow. Record your improved activities under Day 2.

Taking Care of Myself

	Day 1		Day 2	
Physical Well-Being	yes	no	yes	no
Did I eat three balanced meals?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did I get enough sleep?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did I get any exercise?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Emotional Well-Being				
Did I have a generally positive outlook?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did I take a few moments to relax after a stressful situation?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social Well-Being				
Did I spend time with someone I care about?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did I talk through a day's problem with a friend or colleague?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intellectual Well-Being				
Did I read anything for information or interest—a book, an article, the newspaper?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did I learn something new?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Discuss this activity with your trainer and make a commitment to take good care of yourself. Use the space below to note what actions you will take.

I will do the following to take care of myself:

SUMMARIZING YOUR PROGRESS

You have now completed all the learning activities for this module. Whether you are an experienced school-age staff member or a new one, this module has probably helped you maintain or renew a commitment to professionalism. Before you go on, take a few minutes to review your responses to the pre-training assessment for this module. Write a summary of what you learned, and list the skills you developed or improved.

If there are topics you would like to know more about, you will find recommended readings listed in the Orientation in Volume I.

Your final step in this module is to complete the knowledge and competency assessments. Let your trainer know when you are ready to schedule the assessments. If this is your last module, you have successfully completed the training program. Congratulations on a job well done.

ANSWER SHEETS

Maintaining a Commitment to Professionalism

Continually Assessing Your Own Performance

1. **How did Ms. Chavez assess her own performance?**
   - a. She recognized that she lost control and responded to Julie's behavior inappropriately.
   - b. She reflected on what might have caused her outburst and what she could do differently in the future.
   - c. She wrote down her thoughts and conclusions.
2. **What did she decide to do with the results of her assessment?**
   - a. She decided to discuss with her family ways to reorganize their evenings so she could get to bed on time.
   - b. She resolved to use positive guidance in the future to help children learn to treat each other with respect.

Continuing to Learn About School-Age Children

1. **How did Mr. Sullivan decide what knowledge and skills he should work to improve?**
   - a. He completed a self-assessment.
   - b. He talked with Ms. Abrams, his supervisor, to identify areas for improvement.
   - c. He set specific goals.
2. **How did Mr. Sullivan plan to expand his existing knowledge and skills?**
   - a. He selected a module to review.
   - b. He planned to attend in-service training.
   - c. He planned an observation and feedback visit from Ms. Abrams.
   - d. He scheduled a follow-up meeting with Ms. Abrams.

Applying Professional Ethics at All Times

1. **How did Ms. Johnson maintain professional ethics in talking to Danny's mother?**
   a. She greeted Ms. Perkins politely.
   b. She responded to Ms. Perkins' comments in a positive way.
   c. She maintained confidentiality by not discussing Billy's clothing with another parent.
2. **How did Ms. Johnson interact with Billy in a positive manner?**
   a. She recognized that Billy's feelings might have been hurt.
   b. She commented that Billy really liked what he was wearing and acknowledged it looked nice on him.

Ethics Case Studies: Discussion Questions

1. The Abused Child

Are there signs that indicate Martha might be a victim of child abuse?
If so, what do you think they are?

What should school-age staff do when they suspect a child is being abused?

2. The Overwhelmed Parent

How can you support Joey's need to be actively involved in activities at the school-age program and acknowledge Ms. Donovan's concerns?

How can the staff involve Ms. Donovan in resolving this situation?

3. The Angry Child

What additional information about Bobby might it be helpful to know?

Who should be involved in resolving this situation?

How can the staff address Bobby's needs without taking time and attention from the other children in the program?

4. The Neglectful Colleague

Why is it important to follow the program's rules?

How should staff respond when they think a colleague's actions might put children in jeopardy?

5. A Trip to the Bowling Alley

Is it ever okay to bend the program's rules?

How can staff help children understand the reason why some rules help keep them safe?

GLOSSARY

Competence	A skill or ability to do something well.
Ethics	A set of principles, standards, or guidelines that direct acceptable behavior—what is right or good rather than quickest or easiest.
Job description	An official written statement describing the responsibilities of a job.
Networking	Spending time with people who perform similar tasks to share ideas, information, and experiences.
Professionalism	A commitment to gaining and maintaining knowledge and skills in a particular field, and to using that knowledge and those skills to provide the highest-quality services possible.
Professional behavior	The consistent, thorough application of knowledge, skills, and ethics.

NOTES

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